MOLLY WORTHEN The Mormon-Evangelical Smackdown

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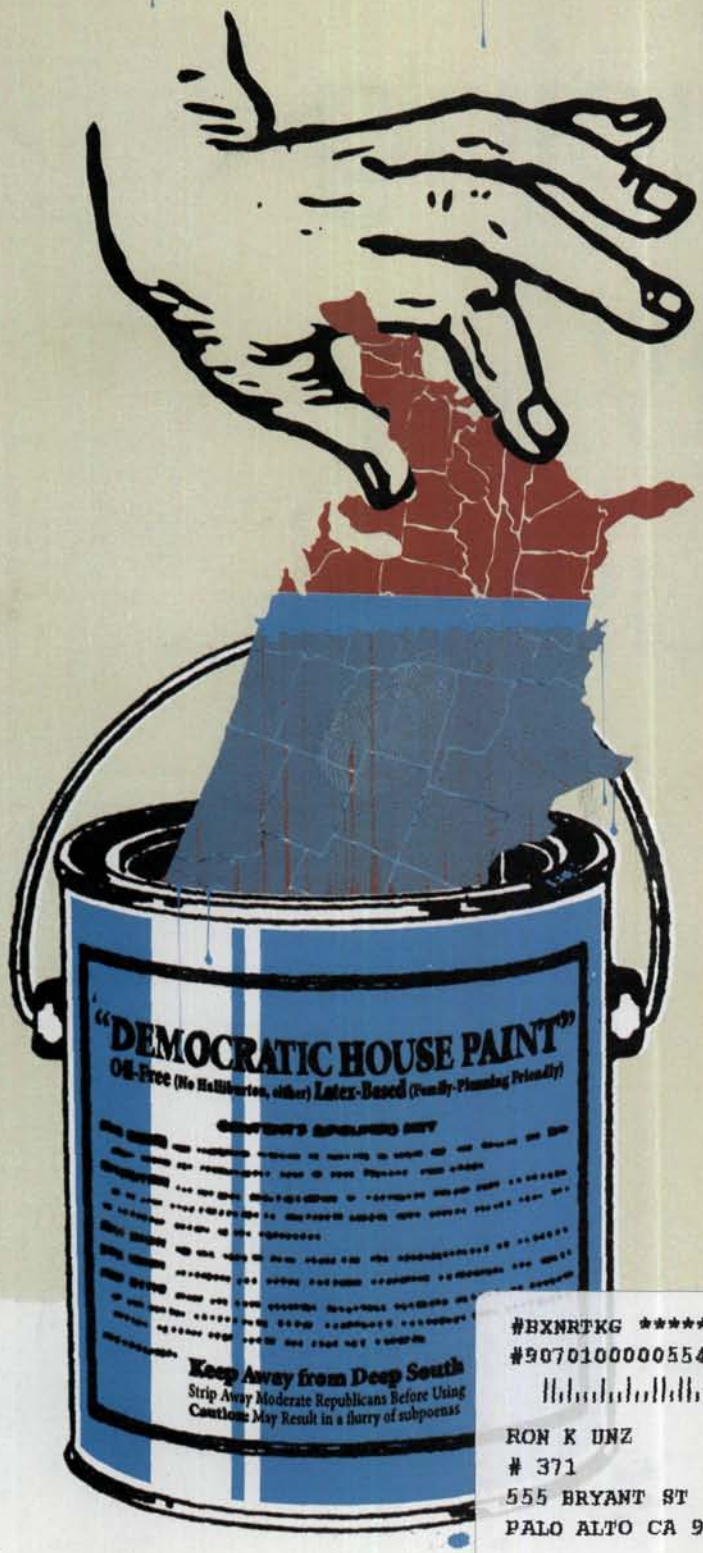
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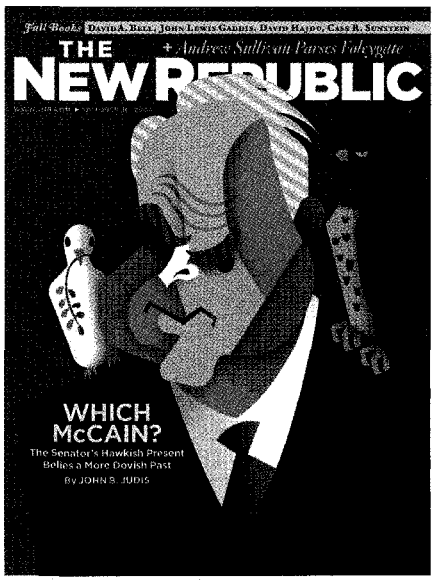
CORRESPONDENCE

JUDGE NOT

CASS R. SUNSTEIN MAKES A GOOD case that it would be unwise to scrap the current Constitution and start from scratch with a second constitutional convention ("It Could Be Worse," October 16). But how could he write his long and learned piece without once mentioning Edmund Burke? What would THE NEW REPUBLIC's famous contributing editor (and Burkophile) Alexander Bickel have thought of *that*?

ROGER CLEGG
Sterling, Virginia



CASS R. SUNSTEIN RESPONDS:
Many thanks to Roger Clegg, who is 100 percent right to say that Burke was an unacknowledged inspiration for my argument. Burke emphasized that traditions are built up by many people over long periods of time and that those who attempt to evaluate traditions, with their merely "private stock" of reason, often know much less than traditions do. Burke usually leaves Americans cold, but the growth of U.S. law, including constitutional law, has often been a Burkean practice, rejecting abstract reason in favor of small steps based on actual experience. An example is the growth in presidential power over time. Here, changes in constitutional understandings came not mostly from courts, but, instead, from a large number of practices to which the executive and legislative branches agreed. A perhaps more controversial example is the constitutional ban on most forms of sex discrimination, which did not arrive as a bolt from the blue. Instead, it was a product of a series of narrow decisions, in which the court built on social practices and traditions as they evolved over time. On both the left and the right, federal judges have occasionally been too cavalier with traditions. Some conservative judges want to wield principles of "inviolate property rights" and "color-blindness" as all-purpose weapons against long-standing practices. Some liberal judges have done the same thing in arguing for a flat ban on capital punishment and in endorsing expansive privacy rights. And, in the current period, it is more than a little interesting to see how many politicians, of both political parties, seem willing to wield abstract theories as weapons against traditions. There is no question that the argument against large-scale constitutional change is best made with close reference to Burke.

JUDT CHECK

LEON WIESELTIER IS QUITE RIGHT ("The Shahid," October 23). Tony Judt is something of a fraud. He presents himself as a victim of Jewish censorship, but, when the censorship

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comes from Muslims threatening to kill those with whom they disagree, he doesn't have a problem. Speaking in mid-October at an NYU forum on the limits of tolerance, he told Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the Somali-born Dutch woman who has been guarded around the clock due to Islamist death threats, that the "emphasis on free speech is something of a self-indulgence." In the standard language of Leninism, he argued that the question is a matter of "who is asserting this right," who is doing what to whom. "What's gained," he asked, "by the freedom to insult Islam?" In his view, only the right can benefit. For Judt, it seems that, as with 1930s Stalinists, the only question worth asking is "which side are you on?" Where Islam is involved, Judt supports the virtues of self-censorship and what the Eastern Europeans under communism called "preemptive obedience."

FRED SIEGEL
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WIESELTIER ADMINISTERED A fine lashing to Judt in his column. I am surprised, however, that nobody has yet noticed the real intellectual absurdity of Judt, a lavishly adulated expert on European history, calling Abraham Foxman, of all people, a "fascist." This suggests that Judt has no understanding of fascism, while preening himself as an expert in an area where real fascism is a major topic. Secondly, when the Polish consulate in New York canceled his talk on the Israel lobby, Judt complained that "the public space for non-conforming opinion in this country is closing down. ... This is, or used to be, the United States of America." One should have expected that an expert on European history would realize that the Polish consulate is not a "public space," but rather a diplomatic office of a foreign nation. Indeed, the Polish consulate, technically, is in the territory of the Polish Republic. The authorities of the Polish Republic, exercising prerogatives dating back millennia in diplomatic history, decided that Judt's views should not be aired at an official facility of their country. Why does he not complain to Warsaw?

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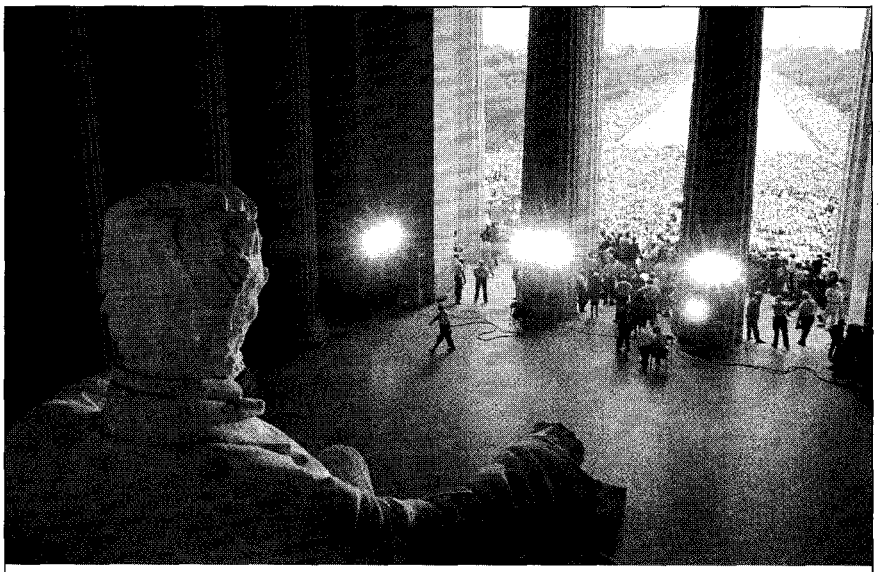

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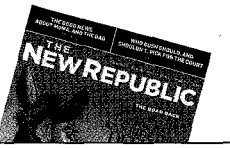

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Block Party

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

NOW THAT THEY have taken the House (and probably the Senate), Democrats should start acting like Republicans. I don't mean the Republicans of today; I mean the Republicans of the late 1990s. In its behavior during Bill Clinton's final years in office, the GOP offers a template for how Democrats should approach the final years of George W. Bush's presidency.

In Clinton's concluding years, the GOP played a brilliant game of good cop–bad cop. In Congress, the Gingrich revolutionaries waged an all-out effort to emasculate the Clinton presidency. After initially dwelling on Clinton's Whitewater land deal, the White House Travel Office, and other political minutiae, the GOP in 1998 tried to use Clinton's lies about his affair with Monica Lewinsky to remove him altogether.

It was kamikaze politics. The public loathed the partisan warfare and, in the 1998 midterm elections, punished Republicans at the polls. But the GOP didn't give up. In 1999 and 2000, it blocked virtually all of Clinton's initiatives—from a prescription-drug benefit to a minimum-wage hike to a post-Columbine push for gun control. Even on foreign policy, where presidents usually gravitate late in their administrations, the Republican Congress kept Clinton on a tight leash. The Senate rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And, with U.S. planes in the sky over Kosovo, it defeated a resolution supporting the war effort and tried to block funding for the peacekeeping that followed. GOP Senator Mitch McConnell even admitted that, when it came to Clinton's agenda, the Republicans pursued a "strategy of not letting any critical mass develop before the election."

For the GOP Congress, all this obstruction was disastrous. Whitewater-obsessive Al D'Amato lost his Senate seat; Newt Gingrich abandoned his speakership and so did his hapless would-be successor, Bob Livingston. But, for Governor George W. Bush, it was a political blessing. By immolating itself, the GOP Congress also blew up the final years of Clinton's presidency and left Americans desperate to end political bloodsport. Which is exactly what candidate Bush promised to do. "I have no stake in the bitter arguments of the last few years," declared Bush in his 2000 convention speech. "I want to change the tone of Washington to one of civility and respect." Again and again, Bush told the heartwarming story of his friendship with his Democratic lieutenant governor, Bob Bullock, who had endorsed Bush's reelection in Texas before dropping dead. Bush even triangulated off the GOP Congress, lamenting that "Americans have seen a cycle of bitterness, an arms race of anger" and "both parties bear some of the blame."

It was a shrewd strategy. Al Gore had numerous advantages in the 2000 race, but, as the sitting vice president to a bitterly polarizing president, he could not easily promise to "change the tone." On Election Day, voters who said Clinton would go down in history more for "scandals" than "leadership" favored Bush by 30 points. In 2000, the American people were happy with the direction of the country but disgusted with the culture of Washington. The Republican Congress had relentlessly stoked that disgust, and George W. Bush rode it all the way to the White House.

None of this is to say Nancy Pelosi and the Democratic Congress should try to destroy Bush personally or impeach him. But neither should they throw him a political lifeline. If Bush wants bipartisan compromises, Democrats should define "bipartisan" the way Bush himself has: partisan initiatives softened around the edges to pick up moderates from the other side. If Bush opposes such efforts, Democrats should try to pass them anyway and force a veto. And they should hold hearings on everything from illegal wiretapping to global warming to Iraq.

This won't warm the hearts of the American people. Republicans will blame Democrats for partisan bickering, and they won't be entirely wrong. But Democrats should not let that stop them. After all, no legislation is better than bad legislation, which is the only kind Bush is likely to sign. And there is a good reason to hold hearings: to restore the balance of legislative-executive power, which the Bush White House has so dramatically altered. Tough investigations are the Democrats' best chance of keeping the administration from using its claims of unchecked presidential power to justify further lawlessness. (Given what the Bushies have already done, it is chilling to remember that scandals often occur during presidents' final years in office.) The Democrats have a historical responsibility: If they don't recalibrate the constitutional scales, future administrations will likely pick up where Dick Cheney leaves off—just as Richard Nixon inherited the "Imperial Presidency" from Lyndon Johnson.

Finally, a confrontational Congress could help the Democrats in 2008. Partisan gridlock might hurt Nancy Pelosi's and Harry Reid's reputations, but the public will mostly blame an unpopular president. And, while the GOP presidential nominee in 2008 will almost certainly try to distance himself from Bush and Washington, a Democrat should find it easier to play the untainted outsider, as Bush did in 2000. Rather than help Bush salvage his presidency, Congress should lay the foundation for a Democratic candidate to run against it.

That will be easier for a Democrat who isn't from Washington. If Democrats have a weakness in 2008, it is that their first-tier candidates mostly hail from the Senate, which is always a liability and more so when Washington is in disrepute. (By contrast, the GOP's great strength is that, in an historical anomaly, Bush's vice president won't be seeking his party's nomination.) Since there's not much Democrats can do in the next two years to improve Washington's reputation, they should look for presidential candidates who aren't tainted by it. That means governors like Bill Richardson, or at least senators (and ex-senators) who can credibly distance themselves from the institution—such as John Edwards and Barack Obama.

Democrats shouldn't fool themselves. The American people haven't given them a mandate to govern; they have given them a mandate to stop Bush from governing. For the next two years, the job of the Democratic Congress will be to block—and to hope that, in 2008, the party hands the ball to someone who can really run.

PETER BEINART

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Rejoice

"WE NOW CLEARLY are not the country that was 49–49. We're now at 51–48 and may be trending to 51–47. It is incremental but small, persistent change. We saw it in 2002, and we saw it again this year. … It tells me we may be seeing part of a rolling realignment."
—Karl Rove, November 7, 2004

Two years ago, Republicans managed to spin a 51 percent victory over a weak opponent into something very big—not quite a landslide, but a mandate, a "rolling realignment," perhaps even (as *Newsweek* breathlessly speculated) "a political dominance that could last for decades."

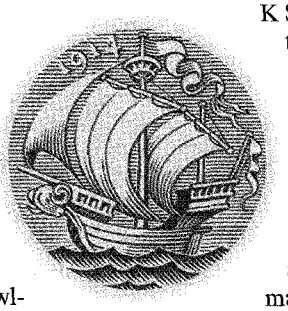
By that standard, what would you call what the Democrats accomplished Tuesday? They won the aggregate House vote by a margin of some ten percentage points, nearly four times the margin Bush ran up against the hapless Kerry in 2004. Their gain of more than two dozen House seats may be modest by historical comparison, but that is only because demography and gerrymandering have compressed the field of contestable seats to a bare minimum.

The same holds true of the Senate. Yes, the Democrats will likely have just a bare two-seat majority. But this is only because the overrepresented low-population states tilt so heavily Republican. If you assume each senator represents half his state's population, the 51 senators caucusing with the Democrats will represent some 58 percent of the United States.

A lot of things have come crashing down with this election. One of them is the absurd cultural prestige enjoyed by President Bush and his supporters. Since 2000, they have continuously bludgeoned their critics with the notion that the only authentic Americans are those living in the red states. Democratic voters have been endlessly told that they are nothing more than a tiny, alien coastal remnant, and many of them started to believe it.

Well, it's hokum. Bush and his vision for the country have been before the voters four times now. Twice (in 2002 and 2004) a narrow majority of voters supported him; once (in 2000) a narrow majority rejected him; and now a substantial majority has rejected him. Bush is not the incarnation of the popular will, and his critics are not anti-American freaks.

Another casualty of the election, we hope, should be the pathological insularity of the administration's foreign policy–making. It has long been obvious to every sentient being, along with many members of the Bush inner circle, that Donald Rumsfeld was an epic disaster as defense secretary. That Bush could not take even the minimal step of acknowledging this glaringly obvious fact made it difficult to believe he could take the immensely more difficult step of coming to grips with Iraq. A global strategic disaster was not enough to shake Bush into action. It took a Republican political disaster as well.



Finally, and most proximately, the election should bury the peculiar form of one-party rule that has so corrupted American politics. Until the present administration, the modern American state had no true experience with one-party rule. Even during those times when Democrats controlled both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, they were a fractious assortment of Northern progressives and Southern conservatives, more coalition than true party. President Clinton's toughest battles during his first two years came with the Democrats running Congress. When Bush won the presidency, there was at last a single party with total control of the levers of power and a relatively coherent vision of government's role. They kept inventing new ways to turn their power into a self-perpetuating machine. It was a frightening thing to behold.

From the moment they took control of Congress in 1994, Republicans handed over astonishing power to the business lobby to rewrite regulations and the tax code to its liking. Republicans held votes in the dead of night, let lobbyists author legislation, and elevated the pork barrel to the central operating principle of government. Their entire legislative program was a massive payoff.

The Republican–K Street nexus, along with the slanted districting of the House, made the ruling claque appear almost unbeatable. And, indeed, it took a staggering combination of factors—a failing war, stagnant wages, endless scandals, the near-loss of a major U.S. city—to finally pry the levers of power out of Republican fingers.

When they won Congress in 1994, Republicans hubristically called it a "revolution." November 7, 2006, was not a revolution, and nobody should expect unbroken sunny days to follow. But it did end a dismal period in American political life, and for that we can only rejoice. ■

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Starbucks-cons.

Hill of Beans

BY CONOR CLARKE

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT liberals love Starbucks. A 2005 Zogby poll found that partisans of the left were twice as likely to go to the world music–playing, fair trade–embracing, Seattle-based coffee chain as they were to patronize Dunkin' Donuts—a well-known peddler of red-state values. No surprise that Bill O'Reilly has declared that he "will not go in a Starbucks," preferring, according to *Newsweek*, "a coffee shop in Manhasset, Long Island, where cops and firemen hang out."

So what is Jonah Goldberg, the unflappably chummy editor-at-large of *National Review*, doing in not just one but thousands of Starbucks coffeehouses across the land? Goldberg's own magazine has lumped Starbucks-goers in with those moon bats who "speak French, allow Janet Jackson to show both her breasts, create a cradle-to-grave welfare state ... read *The New York Times* every day, scramble the satellite signal for Fox News, and worship [their] new leader, Michael Moore." But walk into any Starbucks, and there he is: Jonah Goldberg, on the side of a Starbucks coffee cup. Each white-and-green paper cup comes complete with a celebrity quote, and, on no less than five million of them, you can read Goldberg sound off on the "unthinking mobs of 'independent thinkers' " hammering those "who dare question 'enlightened' dogma."

And Goldberg isn't alone. Spend enough time in Starbucks and you'll see cups with quotes from former Bush speechwriter David "Axis of Evil" Frum ("In politics, partisanship is a force that can make things happen"); right-wing radio chatterbox and *Passion of the Christ* groupie Michael Medved ("The biggest problem with mass media isn't low quality—it's high quantity"); and Discovery Institute bioethicist Wesley J. Smith ("The morality of the 21st Century will depend on how we respond to this simple but profound question: Does every human life have equal moral value simply and merely because it is human?"). You can even sip a purpose-driven latte with words from evangelical megapastor Rick Warren ("You were made by God and for God, and until you understand that, life will never make sense"). All of which raises the question: After spending so much time bashing the blue-state hordes at Starbucks, how did conservatives end up on their cups?

IN EARLY 2005, the higher-ups at Starbucks decided, in an effort to "get people talking," to start printing quotes on every cup the company produced. The series, affectionately dubbed "The Way I See It," grew out of an appreciation for what p.r. manager Carole Pucik calls the "centuries-old tradition of the coffeehouse as a place to gather, share ideas, and enjoy delicious beverages." And it was with that rich, flavorful history in mind that the company started offering various "notable people" the chance to crystallize, without payment, a lifetime of wisdom onto a three-inch square of paper.

Of course, no one would ever confuse Starbucks with an eighteenth-century Parisian salon: The overwhelmingly sappy quotes range from the mildly annoying (Goldie Hawn: "Searching for more joy is not a frivolous pursuit") to the completely unintelligible (Roger Ebert: "A movie is not about what it is about. It is about how it is about it"). But, since bleary-eyed caffeine addicts aren't necessarily deep thinkers, the series got off the ground. There were just two problems. The first was that there were no conservatives: The initial contributors included the likes of Al Franken and environmentalist Denis Hayes, but only one right-winger—Jonah Goldberg. The second problem was Armistead Maupin, the openly gay novelist and chronicler of '70s and '80s San Francisco. When he was offered a place in the series, he didn't hold back. "My only regret about being gay is that I repressed it for so long," reads Maupin's cup. "I surrendered my youth to the people I feared when I could have been out there loving someone. Don't make

DAVID COWLES

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that mistake yourself. Life's too damn short."

Whether Maupin's coffee-cup confessional inspired any chai tea latte–drinkers to come out of the closet may never be known. What is known is that Concerned Women for America (CWA), a Christian organization that prides itself on bringing "biblical principles into all levels of public policy," saw in Maupin's cup the ominous advance of the homosexual agenda. STARBUCKS FUNDS AND PROMOTES HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVISM, declared a CWA press release after the offending cup hit shelves. A testimonial, from one Meghan Kleppinger, soon followed: "I stepped away from my latte, faced my denial about this company, and started to do some serious soul searching." Baylor University, the world's largest Baptist school, banned the offending cup from campus. And *The Washington Times*'s Tom Purcell, after meditating on the lack of conservative quotes, grumbled that "you can't avoid politics anywhere these days, even while sipping your morning brew."

But the conservatives didn't really want to end coffeehouse politics: They wanted cups of their own. So, when Starbucks started trolling around for contributors to the next installment of the series—even though "there was a sense," says Goldberg, "that the few conservatives were being used as fig leaves for a lot of liberal cups"—the conservatives couldn't hop on the bandwagon fast enough. "Coffee is such an important part of my life that I could not say no," says a dangerously caffeine-addicted Frum.

The result: As the series expanded, so did the conservative presence. And, while the company would never admit that it's doing diversity outreach, it drops all the right code words. It seeks, according to Pucik, a "balance of viewpoints and experiences when evaluating contributions to the program." The contributors "include a wide range of people with varying points of view, experiences, and priorities." And so on. As Goldberg puts it, you would think you had stumbled into an admissions department meeting at Brown.

THIS IS, NOT to put too fine a point on it, pretty moronic stuff. First, no one could pick—armed with a lawyer and a set of David Horowitz talking points—a more frivolous arena in which to obsess over questions of diversity and fairness. And, despite its obvious passion for inclusiveness, the company seems to have struck out on some slow-moving diversity softballs: Of the 189 contributors that Pucik made available, 129 are men. (Concerned Women for America does not seem terribly concerned about that.) But perhaps what the conservative cups illustrate, even more than diversity, is the conservative mindset: The right may thumb its nose at liberal culture, but it really wants to be invited in. That's too bad, because, prior to scrambling their way onto the cups, the conservatives actually had a decent point. There's something to be said for a place free of politics and diversity picks. Coffee doesn't need a Clarence Thomas. It just needs to be reasonably priced, consistently drinkable, and only mildly in the thrall of the homosexual agenda. ■

Democratic saviors.

West Wing

BY THOMAS B. EDSALL

EARLIER THIS YEAR, Republican Conrad Burns, locked in a tough struggle to defend his Montana Senate seat, cut a not-terribly-original ad attacking his Democratic challenger. "Jon Tester joins liberal judges opposing proven anti-terror programs, is against the Patriot Act, and his position on Iraq is constantly changing," the script read. But, if Burns's line of attack—the Democrat as flip-flopping friend of activist judges with no appetite for fighting terrorism—was decidedly familiar, the response from his opponent was anything but. "Nearly all of Montana's legislators, including 51 Republicans, want to replace the Patriot Act because it lets federal government agents search our bank accounts, medical records, even our gun sales—for whatever reason," Tester's campaign countered. A Democrat outflanking a Republican on gun rights? It sounds odd. But that was exactly Tester's strategy—and it worked. On Tuesday, Tester narrowly defeated Burns, meaning that Democrats now control both Senate seats in Montana, a staunchly conservative state.

Tester's victory, combined with Democratic advances across the Mountain West this week, signals a major shift in American politics. Support for Democratic candidates in the region has surged in the past four years. Prior to the 2002 election, Democrats controlled no governorships in the band of states that stretch along the spine of the Rockies from Mexico to Canada. But, by this year, they controlled four; and, on Tuesday, they added one more. In addition, over the past four years, Democrats have taken over legislatures in Colorado and Montana.

This shift can be partly explained by demographics: An influx of Latino immigrants, high-tech professionals, and upscale refugees from both coasts certainly has boosted Democratic prospects in the region. But the more important explanation is ideological. The "leave us alone" agenda that once worked so well for Republicans in the Mountain West is now benefiting Democrats like Tester. Western voters—always wary of government intrusion—have grown increasingly distrustful of a GOP identified with deficit spending, the religious right, and humanitarian intervention abroad. Democrats have responded by fielding candidates like Tester who support gun rights, oppose gay marriage, and attack the Bush administration for expanding the reach of government.

In short, the rough outline of a new Democratic ideology—pragmatic, culturally conservative, libertarian—has begun to emerge in the Mountain West. This week, that

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Farm boy Jon Tester (D-Montana)

ideology proved useful for winning elections, but its real benefit could go well beyond the addition of a few House or Senate seats to the Democratic column. More significantly, Western Democrats like Tester have the potential to intellectually reinvigorate the Democratic Party as a whole. Indeed, they may be the only thing that can save a party flush with victory from heading down a road that will lead to future defeats.

FOR THE PAST generation, Democrats have essentially been locked in a two-front battle with Republicans. The first battle was to secure the gains of the civil rights and sexual revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, which sought equality for women, blacks, Latinos, and gays. The second battle was for government action to protect workers and the poor from the untrammeled economic competition brought on by deregulated markets.

Democrats have, in effect, won the first battle; the only question now is how quickly and cooperatively the country will come to terms with the changes this victory has set in motion. No one is going to force women out of the workplace. Civil rights for blacks are firmly entrenched. Even if *Roe* v. *Wade* were overturned, most states would elect to keep abortion legal. (Indeed, voters in conservative South Dakota overturned that state's heavily restrictive abortion law on Tuesday.) Many companies now provide benefits to same-sex couples, and tolerance of homosexuality is steadily increasing. And so on.

But, if Democrats have triumphed on the social front, Republicans have, so far, won the economic fight. The government's ability to protect Americans from the vicissitudes of capitalism has been badly undermined by globalization. Intensified domestic and foreign competition is now a fact of life. The beneficent corporation, muscular trade unionism, and high-paying manufacturing jobs for the working class are quickly becoming relics of the past.

The problem for Democrats is that the lingering effects of the first battle are undermining their ability to wage the second. Democrats have lost white working-class voters—their natural allies on economic issues—because those voters are turned off by the party's cultural liberalism. And that is exactly where the new breed of Western Democrat could help. These politicians come from states where the social left's interest groups are relatively weak and where defiance of Democratic cultural orthodoxies is therefore a virtue, not a liability. As a result, they are untainted by the polarizing debate over cultural issues that has engulfed the country for decades. And they represent a brand of pragmatic libertarianism that cuts a strategic path between the values of social liberals and white working-class voters—and may just prove acceptable to both.

The Democratic winners this week in the Mountain West include adamant partisans of Second Amendment rights as well as supporters of abortion rights—stances that fit well with the region's libertarian ethos. "In the United States, we have a culture and a tradition of choice, freedom, and personal responsibility," argued pro-choice candidate Patricia Madrid of New Mexico, who narrowly lost to Republican incumbent Heather Wilson in what was previously a safe GOP district. About one-third of the credible Western Democratic candidates for major office this election cycle received "A" ratings from the National Rifle Association. Many spoke out against the Patriot Act on privacy grounds. Few are proponents of gay marriage, but many opposed state constitutional amendments banning the practice. They are free to take these pragmatic positions because the districts and states they represent contain no liberal-interest-group infrastructure comparable to, say, the California district represented by Nancy Pelosi or the New York district represented by Charles Rangel.

Indeed, in the Mountain West, it is *Republicans* who are most hobbled by excessive deference to interest groups. One of the issues that allowed Democrats to retake both branches of the Colorado legislature in 2004 was the uncompromising demand of Republican lawmakers that no exemptions be allowed in a conceal-and-carry law—effectively allowing people to bring weapons to churches, schools, or even Denver Broncos games. In Idaho, conservative state Representative Bill Sali won the Republican nomination for a House seat—despite the fact that, a month before the primary election, he had suggested on the statehouse floor that abortion may cause breast cancer. The incident led Idaho's house speaker, a Republican, to denounce Sali to reporters, saying, "That idiot is just an absolute idiot. He doesn't have one ounce of empathy in his whole fricking body. And you can put that in the paper." On Tuesday, Sali won, but only by five points in a strongly conservative district. His struggles were part of a broader pattern: As Western Republicans have moved right, Western Democrats have made headway by capturing the center.

YET, WHILE MOST Western Democrats are moderates, few have spent their careers doing battle with the left like, for instance, Joe Lieberman. And that points to the second way in which Western Democrats could help the party: Because their political

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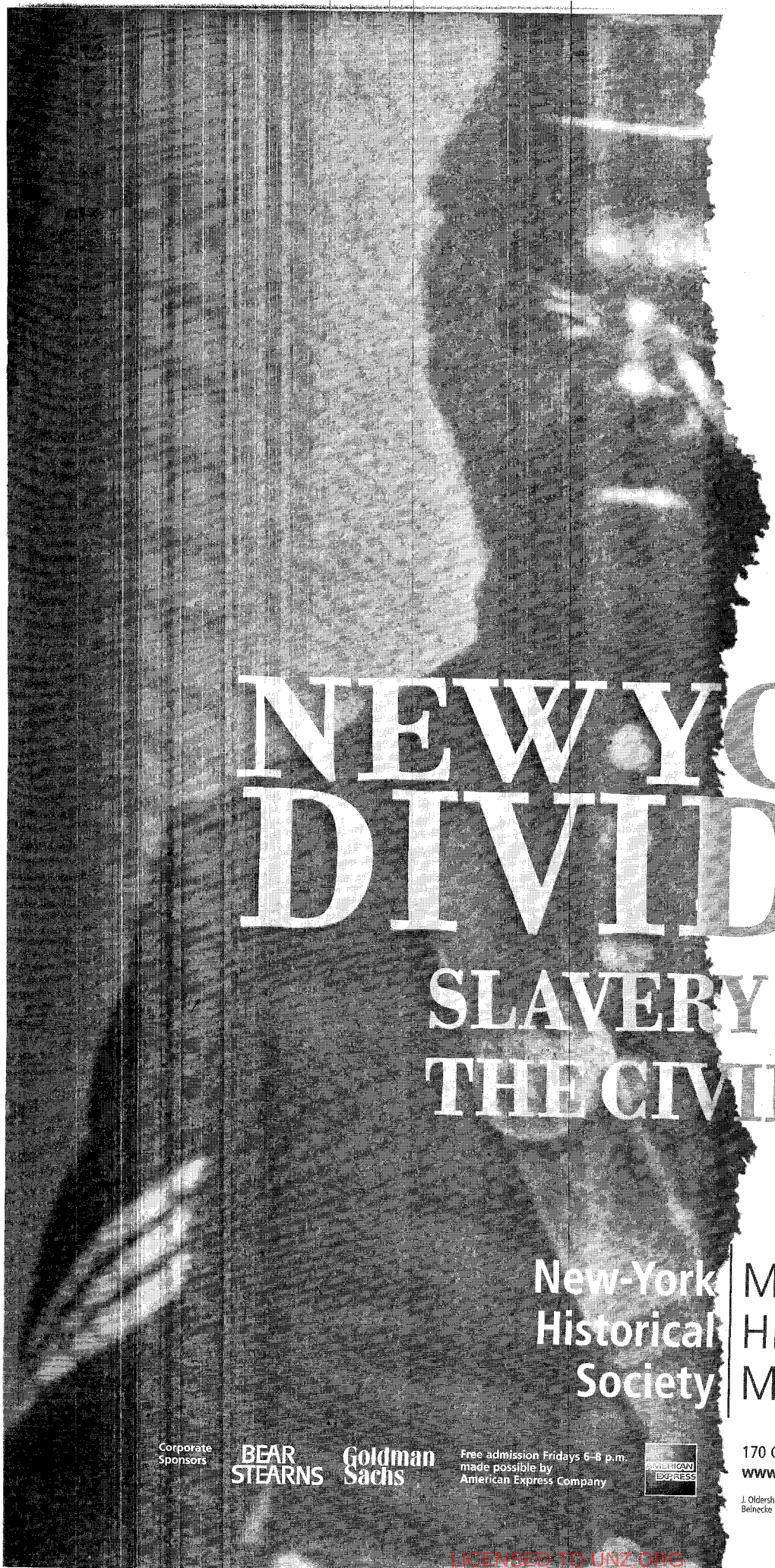

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philosophy transcends the party's major split—between the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) and the left-wing netroots—they may be uniquely well-positioned to help break the Democrats' ideological logjam.

That could prove particularly useful in the coming months. The competition to claim credit for this year's Democratic victories was in full swing well before the results came in. On October 27, the DLC declared that "the ability of Democrats to seize the political center that Republicans have abandoned will largely determine whether progressive gains in this election continue through the 2008 elections." Four days later, Robert Borosage, of the liberal group Campaign for America's Future, fired back: "The leisure-class Democrats are gearing up for a fight about the direction of the Democratic Party. ... But one thing is clear: Democratic gains will come from their opposition to the war in Iraq and their populist indictment of Republican economic policies and corruption. That will supply the mandate for the party—not a return to the pro-war, corporate-driven policies of the DLC Democrats." Tensions between the party's two factions, liberal blogger David Sirota recently warned, are "ready to explode."

If the only upshot of Democratic gains this week is to revive the internecine warfare that has plagued the party since 1968, then it will be a Pyrrhic victory indeed. To avoid this, someone is going to have to persuade the party's activists to spend less energy fighting one another and more energy fighting Republicans. That won't be an easy task. But the Western Democrats probably have the best shot. ■

The subpoena wars.

House Arrest

BY JEFFREY ROSEN

ON THE EVE of losing the House, the Republican National Committee sent journalists a frantic e-mail. "Who is Rep. John Conyers (D-MI)?" the missive asked, referring to the man now slated to lead the House Judiciary Committee. "A radical Democrat who would promote an agenda of investigation, obstruction, impeachment and disarmament."

As far as GOP bogeymen go, Conyers has some credibility. During the past two years alone, he has requested investigations of the administration's renditions of suspected terrorists, Condoleezza Rice's possible transgression of Hatch Act prohibitions against campaigning on the job, and Justice Department attempts to obstruct the hydra-headed Jack Abramoff investigation. And, of course, the RNC also pointed to Conyers's proposals for the possible impeachment of President Bush.

But, while Republicans paint a nightmare scenario of subpoena-mad Democrats, they fail to capture its truly melodramatic conclusion. Yes, Democrats will attack hard. As one staffer told me, "[T]he memos I've seen suggest that Congress has strong power to investigate. We'll try to find the best test case, and, if we can show that Republicans are part of a cover-up, it's a good fight for us." But Democrats also insist that they will take care to avoid the errors of Clinton-era Republicans, who were spoiling for impeachment as soon as they seized the House in 1994 (see Michael Crowley, "Subpoena Envy," November 6).

Restraint, however, may not be enough to prevent a constitutional confrontation that could make Monicagate look tame. That's because any conflict could escalate quickly when the White House, invoking its radical theory of unilateral executive authority, refuses to cooperate with Democratic investigations. Congress may then hold the White House officials in contempt, setting up legal battles that could make their way to the Supreme Court while paralyzing the government in the process. One likely spark for this kind of conflagration is a Democratic investigation into the National Security Agency's (NSA) secret surveillance program.

HERE'S HOW A constitutional collision could unfold. After the new Congress begins in January, Chairman Conyers sends letters to the Justice Department and the White House counsel demanding secret documents that cast light on the scope and mechanics of the snooping. The questions might include whether Bush obstructed justice when he denied the security clearances that the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility needed to investigate the program.

True to form, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Bush ignore the letters. Conyers responds by issuing subpoenas for documents and testimony. Gonzales then insists that the documents are protected by executive privilege. The Judiciary Committee, followed by the full House, votes to hold Gonzales in contempt of Congress—a federal crime with a punishment of up to a year in prison. After Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of the House, certifies the contempt citation, she then forwards it along to the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, demanding that he haul Gonzales before a grand jury.

What happens next? The U.S. attorney might well ignore the request, leading House Democrats to sue in federal court for an order mandating the prosecution of Gonzales. Here, the legal precedents are in the Democrats' favor. During the Teapot Dome scandal in the 1920s, Congress investigated the attorney general's failure to prosecute Harding administration corruption, and executive officials refused to respond to subpoenas. The Supreme Court issued two important decisions, sustaining the arrest of the attorney general's brother for contempt of Congress and up-

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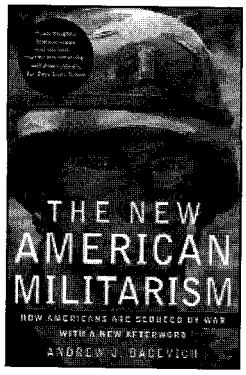

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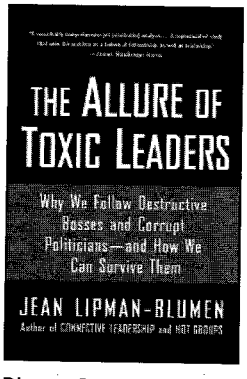
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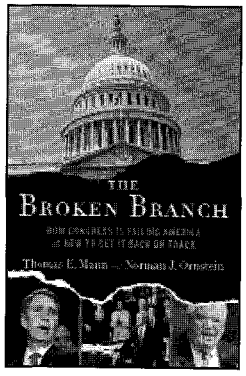

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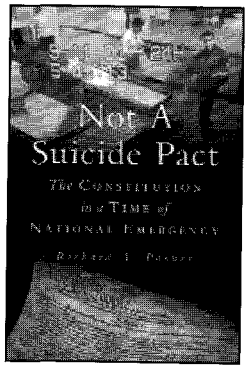

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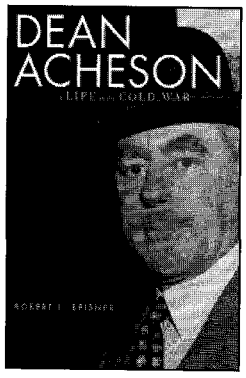

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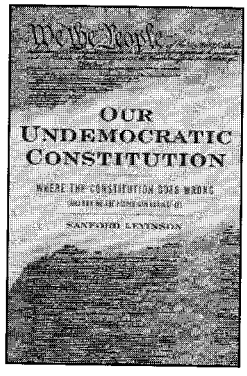

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holding the contempt conviction of a witness who refused to answer questions on the grounds that the courts were already investigating Teapot Dome.

The last time the House cited an executive official for contempt was in 1982, when Anne Gorsuch, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, asserted executive privilege and refused to respond to a subpoena from House members investigating the Superfund scandal. A grand jury ultimately declined to intervene in the fight. The White House eventually agreed to provide limited access if Democrats dropped the contempt citation.

It's difficult to imagine the Bush administration being similarly accommodating. A White House that has insisted that its executive authority gives it the right to stretch or ignore laws with which it disagrees is not likely to fold under threat of congressional contempt. If Gonzales and Bush decide to fight a congressional contempt citation all the way to the Supreme Court, it's hard to predict what the Court would do. In *United States* v. *Nixon* in 1974, the Court rejected Richard Nixon's claim of absolute executive privilege and ordered him to turn over the tapes that had been subpoenaed by the Watergate special prosecutor. The Court suggested that it might reach a different result in a case involving "a claim of need to protect military, diplomatic, or sensitive national security secrets." But other cases have held that Congress has broad power to subpoena even confidential information, because courts presume that congressional committees will act responsibly and won't lightly vote to make classified material public—which they're legally free to do. As the Roberts Court's performance in *Hamdan* v. *Rumsfeld* suggests, it is not shy about standing up to the president to defend the powers of Congress. And, in a head-to-head judicial conflict with Congress, Bush could plausibly lose.

REGARDLESS OF HOW the Supreme Court ruled in *Conyers* v. *Gonzales*, there would be subsidiary legal battles raging for months as the contempt case made its way up to the Supreme Court. Democrats and Republicans would fight about whether to force Gonzales to testify by granting him the necessary immunity—immunity grants require a two-thirds vote by the relevant committee—and the scope of his immunity might provoke lawsuits of its own. All these fires would be raging from a single investigation into the NSA scandal. At the same time, a series of related battles and lawsuits might be erupting from parallel investigations into Iraq war intelligence, Halliburton cronyism, and the misuse of presidential signing statements.

Even if the Supreme Court eventually ruled against Congress in *Conyers* v. *Gonzales*, Congress could always enforce contempt citations on its own. In a little-used procedure, Congress has the power to punish recalcitrant witnesses for "inherent contempt." As Morton Rosenberg of the Congressional Research Service points out in an invaluable 1995 report on investigative oversight that House Democrats are now heavily consulting, the defiant witness can be brought before the House or Senate by the sergeant at arms, tried, and locked up in the capitol jail. (In 2004, a citizen-activist was sentenced to a six-month term there for "disrupting Congress" by demanding to testify at a judicial confirmation hearing.) This inherent contempt procedure hasn't been invoked by Congress for more than 70 years, because a cumbersome trial for contempt has the potential to grind Congress to a halt. But, if the White House is obdurate and the courts are unsympathetic, congressional Democrats might decide that a contempt trial—unlike a presidential impeachment—would be good politics as well as good theater. And, of course, the House is always free to impeach Gonzales for his refusal to cooperate, which might be less politically risky than an impeachment of Bush.

The history of congressional investigations suggests that Congress can score political points by challenging a defiant White House, but only when it maintains some sense of proportion. Whitewater, for example, was a gift to Bill Clinton's opponents—until House Republicans embarked on their quixotic pursuit of impeachment. This time around, House Democrats say they will assimilate the lessons of the recent past and provoke Bush into overreacting to their subpoenas while keeping their cool. Of course, this restraint may be undone by a few hotheaded colleagues in the mood for payback. Regardless of who wins this match of constitutional chicken, it may occupy most of Bush's attention until he departs office in January 2009—a moment that the nation, by that point, will greet with exhaustion and relief. ■

The last GOP moderate.

Omega Man

BY JASON ZENGERLE

NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

THERE'S NO GREATER softball question in all of politics than the one reporters lob at candidates right before they go into their local polling places to vote for themselves: *How do you feel?* All politicians, even the ones destined for certain defeat, invariably respond with something upbeat, like *Great!* or *Confident!* But, on Tuesday morning, as the embattled Connecticut Representative Chris Shays headed into an elementary school in his Bridgeport neighborhood to pull the lever for himself, he couldn't muster anything quite that optimistic. Asked how he felt, Shays replied, "Numb."

Shays's lack of sensation was understandable. During his 19 years in the House, he had become a moderate Republican icon—bucking his party on issues like campaign finance

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reform, abortion, and stem-cell research. But, on Iraq, Shays had voted for the war and then stubbornly supported President Bush's "stay the course" strategy until only three months ago, when he came out in favor of a timetable for withdrawal. Shays's Democratic opponent, Diane Farrell, had repeatedly attacked him for his stance on Iraq and for his party affiliation more generally—constantly rapping him for his support of "the Bush agenda."

And, in this affluent, educated southern Connecticut congressional district—whose voters are 28 percent Republican, 31 percent Democratic, and 41 percent independent (and which John Kerry carried in 2004)—it looked as if those attacks would pay off. Many Democrats and independents who had once supported Shays were poised to jump ship. "If I voted for Chris and [House Speaker Dennis Hastert] kept his seat by one vote, I couldn't live with myself," one erstwhile Shays supporter told the *Hartford Courant*. Even *The New York Times*, which had previously endorsed Shays each time he'd faced a serious opponent, came out in favor of Farrell. Heading into Election Day, Shays could take some solace in the fact that polls showed the race too close to call. But, with a blue wave seemingly rolling across the country and particularly New England—where one moderate House Republican from Connecticut, Nancy Johnson, lost and another, Rob Simmons, now faces a recount—it looked likely that he would be swept under.

So, about twelve hours after he voted—and three hours after the polls closed—when Shays strode into a packed hotel ballroom in Norwalk to declare victory, there was no one more surprised, it seemed, than he was.

How did Shays manage to win? Certainly not because of the GOP. At every turn in the campaign, he played down his party affiliation. Shays's campaign literature and ads were scrubbed clean of any trace of the dreaded R-word; instead, they hailed the candidate for his "independence." Even when Shays appeared at the Connecticut Republican Party's convention in May, he seemed to go out of his way to distance himself from the GOP, telling a reporter, "I can't say we have, as a party, earned the right to stay in the majority, but I think I've shown I can be effective."

And the Republican Party's attempts to help Shays only hurt him. The National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) blanketed Shays's district with fliers attacking Farrell for being soft on terrorism—DIANE FARRELL: COFFEE TALK WITH THE TALIBAN, read one mailing—and questioning the wisdom of some of her spending decisions when she served as a selectwoman in Westport. "They said that Chris's opponent spent 40,000 dollars on a turf field," complained Shays's campaign manager, Michael Sohn. "This is Fairfield County, Connecticut! People spend 40,000 dollars to have their lawn done for them in the summer! ... We were fighting on the ground and there was this air war going on overhead, but the NRCC was dropping bombs on our own home."

But Shays had something to offset the disadvantage of his party affiliation: the advantage of incumbency. He constantly reminded voters of all the pork he had brought home over the years—boasting of the federal funds he secured for projects ranging from road improvements to the renovation of a dental-hygiene training clinic. He also sought to cast himself as a gracious elder statesman, largely eschewing harsh, personal attacks against Farrell. And, even when he indulged the temptation to wander into wingnut territory—strangely declaring at one point that Abu Ghraib "was not torture" but was a "sex ring"—he quickly apologized, which only served to reinforce his bland, above-the-fray campaign slogan: "Listens. Learns. Helps. Leads."

Most importantly, Shays faced Farrell's criticisms on Iraq head-on. Although he ultimately bowed to reality in Iraq and, in August, came out in favor of a timetable for withdrawal—a move Farrell blasted as a cynical election-year ploy—he did not, à la Joe Lieberman, try to avoid the issue. Indeed, just like Farrell, Shays made Iraq the cornerstone of his campaign. He repeatedly emphasized his record on the war, including the more than 15 hearings he has held on Iraq as the chairman of the National Security Subcommittee of the Government Reform Committee and the 14 trips he has taken to the country since the start of the war—the last of which, he said, ultimately convinced him that "stay the course" was no longer a viable strategy. "I ran a race that my political advisers said I shouldn't run," Shays said the morning of the election. "I didn't run away from the war."

That attitude carried over into Shays's victory speech on Tuesday night. For three hours, hundreds of his supporters had watched on a large projection screen as the election results were posted, growing more and more excited as it became clear that their candidate was actually going to win. And, when Shays entered the low-ceilinged hotel ballroom around 11 p.m., he made his way through a gauntlet of hugs and kisses to the podium. Once there, Shays made sure to give the requisite thanks to his supporters, staff, and family, but he did not strike the typically triumphant notes of a victorious candidate.

"I don't know how you'll react to this, but I want to also say this," he said, after quieting his supporters who'd been joyously chanting, "Two more years!" He then unfolded a piece of paper and read off a list of names. "I sent them to Iraq and they came home draped in American flags," Shays continued, as the once-raucous ballroom became eerily quiet. "I think about them almost every day of my life, and, when the press talked about how tormented I must feel about losing the election, they just didn't get it. ... The only torment I feel is for those families, and I pray that we can make it right for these families and that we will find a way to have our men and women come home from success, not failure, but that we find a way to bring them home." It was a numbing sentiment indeed. ■

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Pelosi's pet issue.

Private Lesson

BY JONATHAN COHN

"THIS VOTE WAS stolen from us by the Republicans," seethed House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi following passage of President Bush's Medicare drug benefit in November 2003. She was referring to the egregious effort by the GOP leadership to keep the vote open until they achieved a majority—three hours of browbeating, arm-twisting, and even alleged bribery that culminated in a razor-thin victory in the wee small hours of the night. But she might just as well have been talking about the issue itself.

For years, House Democrats had called for adding a prescription-drug benefit to Medicare, while Republicans had resisted. Now, following the White House's lead, the GOP had finally embraced a drug benefit—and it bore little resemblance to what Democrats had in mind. They had envisioned a benefit administered directly by the government, just like the original physician and hospital insurance portions of the program. Instead, under the GOP proposal, private insurers would do that job. As a result, the Democrats said, the program would cost more, and cover less, than necessary. Particularly distressing was a "donut hole" in the coverage that left seniors exposed to thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket expenses. But, at the time, there was precious little the Democrats could do apart from fume.

Now, however, they are poised to put their words into action. As part of the six-point agenda Pelosi has promised to deliver in the first 100 hours of the new Congress, the Democrats have said they will repeal part of the Medicare drug package—specifically, a provision that prohibits the government from negotiating price reductions with drug companies. This change probably won't do much to bring down drug prices right away. But it will be the first shot fired in a political war that should have been fought long ago and is sure to get hotter in the next two years: whether government or the private sector is best-suited to delivering health insurance.

UNTIL RECENTLY, THE issue of whether government should run Medicare, in particular, was largely settled. The whole reason the program even existed was that, by the 1960s, it had become clear that private insurance was ill-suited for the elderly, given their myriad health problems. But, in the mid-'90s, when Newt Gingrich and the Republicans took over Congress, they unleashed a frontal assault on the program, proposing to transform it into a system of competing private insurance plans—a change that would have eroded the basic guarantees of health security that Medicare provides. Members of the Clinton administration and many other Democrats, while not willing to go that far, shared Gingrich's belief that private insurance—primarily in the form of HMOs—could help make Medicare more efficient. That consensus led to the creation of a program called "Medicare+Choice," which allowed seniors to opt out of Medicare and enroll in an HMO.

The HMOs were a hit at first, since they offered more benefits than traditional Medicare. But that initial rush partly reflected the fact that commercial insurers were underpricing their plans in the early stages to build market share—and that they were, in effect, gaming the system by drawing off healthier Medicare beneficiaries who didn't run up large bills. Once the government cut back the reimbursements to reflect this, the insurers began to drop out or reduce their benefits.

The most important benefit HMOs had offered was drug coverage, which traditional Medicare lacked. So the failure of "Medicare+Choice" prompted conversations about creating a more comprehensive drug benefit that would be available to all seniors. But Republicans (and some Democrats) continued to insist that the private sector could deliver insurance to the elderly more efficiently than the government could. And, in 2003, they got their way—enacting the law we have today. Under its provisions, seniors can get drug coverage by signing up for a managed-care plan (as they could before), or they can purchase a stand-alone plan that will supplement their basic Medicare. Either way, the drug coverage comes from private insurance.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the health care special interests that have helped finance Republican campaigns make out quite nicely under this scheme. The insurance companies, for example, are getting overpaid again—by as much as 25 percent, according to some studies. But the biggest winner has been the pharmaceutical industry. The law not only means more opportunities to sell its wares; it also means that the government won't meddle in drug company practices or pricing. Indeed, to ensure that pharmaceutical-makers weren't subject to excessive regulatory oversight, the law's architects inserted language explicitly prohibiting the government from negotiating for lower drug prices.

In other countries, it is precisely such government meddling that has reduced the price of drugs to well below what American consumers—and U.S. insurance companies—pay for them. And that is why Pelosi and the Democrats have proposed to revisit the provision. On its own, striking the noninterference language would not affect drug pricing. It would merely give the secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to take action—something that's unlikely to happen as long as Bush is in office.

But a future administration could use such authority. The government could, for instance, insist on lower prices for certain popular drugs. (The drug-makers could refuse, but then they would potentially lose the government's

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business—a huge market.) It could also create a formulary system, with lists of drugs for which it would either pay in full, pay in part, or not pay at all—and base inclusion on price or quality or, ideally, both. The Department of Veterans Affairs (V.A.) has a formulary system that many experts cite as a model, in part because it has held down drug prices much better than the private sector. Dean Baker, an economist at the liberal Center for Economic and Policy Research, has estimated that switching to a system of government-negotiated prices would save more than $40 billion a year. That's probably optimistic, but even smaller savings could help create a more comprehensive drug benefit—thereby filling part of the "donut hole"—or provide cash for other spending priorities.

THAT MAY EXPLAIN why the pharmaceutical industry and its allies are emphasizing other arguments against Pelosi's proposal—chief among them that having the government involved in drug pricing will lead to fewer medical breakthroughs (by reducing the drug companies' ability to invest in research) or will result in restricted access for patients who need life-saving medications. It's a potent argument: People may not like it when life-saving drugs are expensive, but they're likely to be even more spooked by the prospect that the drugs won't be made available to them or may not even exist.

This argument has several flaws, starting with what we know about how Americans use prescription drugs. Reams of statistical data suggest Americans are routinely using expensive drugs for conditions that either don't need treatment or could be treated more cheaply with different medications. A big reason for this is the marketing practices of the pharmaceutical industry, which uses junkets and other less-than-savory practices to push their wares on doctors while blitzing the airwaves with TV advertisements to drum up demand among consumers. A classic case of this—recounted vividly in Merrill Goozner's book *The $800 Million Pill*—was the development of and heavy promotion behind Nexium, a drug from AstraZeneca that treats acid reflux. It is virtually identical to Prilosec, which AstraZeneca also produces. Right before Prilosec's patent expired, making it much cheaper (because generic drugmakers could now produce their own version), AstraZeneca heavily advertised Nexium as the next-generation pill and provided free samples so that people could try it—even though the vast majority of people with reflux would have done just as well sticking with Prilosec.

In fact, as Goozner and other industry critics have shown, the most important basic medical and scientific research that leads to major medical breakthroughs usually takes place under government auspices—typically, through grants from the National Institutes of Health. In other words, taxpayers—not drug companies—are the ones financing the most important drug research today. So, even if the pharmaceutical industry did reduce its research and development investment because of declining revenues, what we'd lose probably wouldn't be the next cure for cancer—it would be the next treatment for seasonal allergies, and likely no better than the ones we have already.

Drug-makers also caution that, if the government adopts formularies, they would block access to necessary drugs for severely ill patients. But private insurers—including the ones now serving Medicare beneficiaries—use formularies, too. And studies of the V.A. formulary by both the Government Accountability Office and the Institute of Medicine found no evidence of access problems.

The last line of defense for drug-makers is that the current Medicare program is working, so why mess with it? And, in fact, the program has operated more smoothly since its famously rocky start last January, when mass confusion reigned and thousands of elderly seniors couldn't get their drugs covered. But these problems were as much about program implementation as design. The more serious concern has always been about the program's long-term sustainability—and its cost. There's every reason to suspect that, like the Medicare HMOs of the '90s, the private insurers now rushing into the Medicare business will gradually start to drop out—particularly since some of the law's provisions, designed to protect companies in the early going, will expire starting in 2009. And, even to the extent that the program does continue to work, it will only be at an unreasonably high expense, thanks to all the unnecessary subsidies for the insurance and pharmaceutical industries.

FOR NOW, SIMPLY striking the noninterference language makes sense as a first step. Such a measure should have unanimous support (or something very close to it) among the Democratic caucus, according to Hill staffers and strategists from both parties. And an even stronger bipartisan measure in the Senate, sponsored by Olympia Snowe and Ron Wyden, has already garnered the support of 54 members. Given the Democratic gains, it is likely to pass the Senate.

That would land the bill on Bush's desk, where he would have two unappetizing options. If he vetoes it, Democrats could wield the issue against Republicans, the same way they did against Nancy Johnson and Clay Shaw this fall. (Both veteran House members lost their seats.) And, if Bush signs it, Democrats would get to hold oversight hearings. Either way, they would get a chance to put this issue on the public agenda and generate support for transforming the Medicare drug program into something closer to what they originally had in mind. Along the way, they would get to hammer away at another, broader point: that, when it comes to financing Americans' medical expenses, often the government really is better than the private sector. That's just as true for the working-age population as it is for the elderly—a point worth making whenever the next debate over universal health care begins. If Pelosi has her way, it could begin as soon as next year. ■

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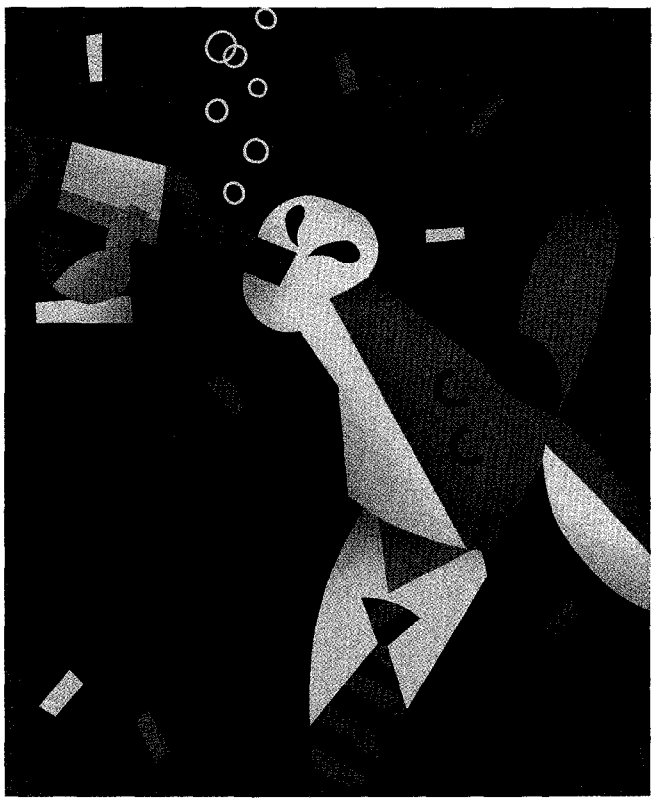
How the Dems won.

Blue's Clues

BY JOHN B. JUDIS



IT'S ABOUT TIME. After a series of frustrating election nights for Democrats, dating back to the Florida boondoggle in 2000, this year's election is a clear triumph. But was it, like the Watergate election of 1974, simply the result of correctible mistakes by the opposition? Or have the Republican scandals and the Bush administration's misadventure in Iraq brought to the surface trends that will lead to a new political majority? It's too early to say for certain, but it seems this election has at least provided Democrats with an *opportunity* to build a lasting congressional majority. Whether they succeed in doing so will depend partly on whether they understand what made for their smashing success this November. Here's a hint: It had something to do with energizing their own base, but it had much more to do with winning over voters that historically have had a stormy relationship with the Democratic Party.

Some of the Democratic victories occurred in states or congressional districts carried by Al Gore in 2000 and John Kerry in 2004. These districts were going to turn Democratic when their Republican incumbents retired or when the voters in these districts, faced with Republican malfeasance, decided to vote on party lines. That accounts for Ed Perlmutter's victory in suburban Denver and the defeats of GOP moderates like Representative Jim Leach in Iowa and Senator Lincoln Chafee in Rhode Island. These seats should remain Democratic.

But Democrats also won in a host of districts and states that George W. Bush carried in the last election. In some cases, Democrats won primarily because the seat had been held by a Republican implicated in a personal or political scandal. But, in many others, Democrats benefited from the reemergence of political trends that had been suppressed after September 11—or, even before that, by Bill Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky. The most important of these trends involves independents.

THERE IS NO dependable measure of independents. Some states don't even allow voters to register as independents. But, when exit polls and the University of Michigan's American National Election Studies have asked voters whether they consider themselves independents, the percentage has grown from roughly one-fifth of the electorate after World War II to over one-third today, making them a larger group nationally than self-identified Democrats or Republicans.

In the South, independents tend to be former Democrats who have begun to vote Republican but are unwilling to describe themselves as Republicans. In the North and West, however, they occupy a much more distinct political niche. They include libertarian-minded professionals and small-business owners—especially in the West—and white working-class voters in the Northeast and Midwest. They are equally uncomfortable with the feminist left and the religious right. What they dislike most is government interference in their personal lives. They see Washington as corrupt and want it reformed. They favor balanced budgets but also Social Security and Medicare. They worry about U.S. companies moving their plants to Mexico and about China exporting underpriced goods to the United States. They favor a strong military, but they want it used strictly against foreign aggression.

In the 1980s, these voters generally supported Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush; but, in 1992, many of them abandoned Bush for Ross Perot, who received 18.9 percent of the national vote. Perot did well in the West, Midwest, and Northeast, but not in the Deep South. In 1994, two-thirds of Perot voters, disgusted with what they saw as continuing corruption in Washington, backed the Gingrich revolution, accounting for much of the GOP's success outside the Deep South.

Perot, of course, vanished from the scene after attempting a repeat performance in 1996. But the constituency he had spoken for remained and even grew. In 1996, Clinton and the Democrats won back many of these voters, but, after September 11, they gravitated toward the Republican Party, helping to account for Republican success in 2002 and 2004. In this election, however, independents flocked

DAVID COWLES

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THE BLUE RIBBON REPORT RICHARD NIXON CHOSE TO BURY

After Richard Nixon flattened the Democrats as soft on crime in the '68 election, the President-elect faced a dilemma. There's not much the White House can do to impact crime. The thugs people are afraid of — burglars, robbers, rapists, murderers — are the business of state courts. Then somebody mentioned drugs.[1]*

In a textbook example of fear manipulation, Nixon warned the country that a plague of unimaginable proportions was about to engulf the nation. "The problem has assumed the dimensions of a national emergency," he said.[2] To fight the pushers on their own terms, he would need emergency powers — preventive detention, unorthodox strike forces, more freedom to search, wire tap, and arrest.

For scientific support, he appointed former Republican Pennsylvania Governor Ray Shafer to head a National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse. He told Gov. Shafer to treat marijuana just like heroin despite the "obvious differences between marijuana and other drugs."[3] He was even more direct with chief of staff Bob Haldeman. "I want a Goddamn strong statement about marijuana...that just tears the ass out of them."[4]

But after months of testimony from academics, medical experts, lawmen and health professionals, the facts overwhelmed the myths. The report was devastating: "Marijuana use, in and of itself, is neither causative of, nor directly associated with crime..."[5] It found no basis for the gateway theory. Alcohol, it said, was probably a greater danger, and the report concluded that personal use of marijuana should no longer be a crime.[6]

The President hit the roof. He complained to Haldeman, "...every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing marijuana is Jewish."[7]

In the face of the shooting war in Vietnam the Shafer Commission was quickly forgotten but the consequences of that cover-up are with us still. Since the 1972 release of that official report recommending legalization, we have arrested more than 14 million Americans[8] at a cost of over $100 billion[9] and the use of marijuana is undiminished.[10]

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
info@csdp.org

* Visit http://www.csdp.org/publicservice/nixon06notes.htm for citations, including full text of the Shafer Report

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back to the Democrats. Nationally, the Democrats won independents by 57 percent to 39 percent. In the East, the margin was 63 to 33 percent; in the Midwest, 56 to 41 percent; and, in the West, 58 to 35 percent. Democrats also did well in many of those Western and Midwestern states where Perot had won over 20 percent of the vote in 1992: Arizona, Colorado, Kansas (where the Democrats won two of four House seats and the top state offices), Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

The Democrats also made gains among a critical subgroup of independents—the white working-class voters known as Reagan Democrats. In the Midwest, Democrats won these voters (most clearly identifiable in the polls as voters with "some college") by 50 to 49 percent. White working-class support accounted, among other things, for Democratic victories over Republican incumbents in three predominately white downscale Indiana congressional districts that had backed Bush in 2000 and 2004.

Prior to the election, much was made of how conservative some of the Democratic candidates were, but the focus on candidates like North Carolina's Heath Shuler (who won) or Kentucky's Ken Lucas (who lost) misses what helped many Democrats in the Midwest and West unseat Republicans. These candidates were not neoconservatives nor liberals, but the heirs to Perot's peculiar centrism. They advocated fair trade, not free trade, and promised to reform the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). They denounced illegal immigration but didn't endorse the punitive House Republican measures. Rather than advocate new spending measures, they called for balanced budgets and reform of Washington politics.

This description fits the rural New York, Colorado, Montana, and Indiana congressional candidates. It even fits Ohio Senate candidate Sherrod Brown, who was sometimes considered a darling of the Democratic left. In his economic appeals, Brown echoed Perot rather than Ted Kennedy. In one typical commercial, he declared, "Before I ask for your vote, I owe it to you to tell you where I stand. I'm for an increase in the minimum wage and against trade agreements that cost Ohio jobs. I support stem-cell research, tighter borders, and a balanced-budget amendment."

Much was also made of how some successful Democrats, such as Pennsylvania Senator-elect Bob Casey and Colorado Governor-elect Bill Ritter, opposed abortion or gun control. They certainly did, and, by doing so, neutralized some of the opposition from the religious right and the National Rifle Association. But, in general, these centrist Democrats kept the focus on the economy and the war in Iraq and away from social issues, except for stem-cell research, which is universally popular outside the Deep South. Without saying it, they managed to convey that they had no intention of pressing their convictions on guns or abortion.

Democrats also won many of the other constituencies that had begun moving their way two decades ago, but whose movement had halted after September 11. For instance, professionals—best identified in exit polls as voters with postgraduate education—backed Democrats by 58 percent to 41 percent in congressional races. (In the East, the margin was a whopping 67 to 32 percent.) These voters played an important role in the defeat of Arizona Republican J.D. Hayworth and in Democratic victories in suburban Connecticut and high-tech Nashua, New Hampshire. The gender gap, which had closed in 2002, opened wide again, accounting for Senate victories by Claire McCaskill in Missouri, Sheldon Whitehouse in Rhode Island, James Webb in Virginia, and Jon Tester in Montana. Latinos, who had been wooed successfully by the Bush administration but were alienated by the House Republicans, backed Democrats in overwhelming numbers. In the West, Latinos, who had supported Democratic candidates by only 59 to 40 percent in 2004, backed them this year by a landslide of 72 to 27 percent.

One other constituency deserves mention: younger voters. In 2002, voters aged 18 to 29 split evenly between Democrats and Republicans. This year, they backed Democrats by 63 to 33 percent. These voters won't necessarily provide the numbers to win elections for the Democrats, but they can provide energy to revitalize the party. They write blogs, knock on doors, and encourage candidates, such as Montana's Jon Tester or Northern California's Jerry McNerny, neither of whom were initially taken seriously by party officials. They don't necessarily provide solutions to great policy questions; but they can force attention to problems that require solutions, as they did with the Vietnam war in the 1960s and the Iraq war today. As the unions have lost members and clout, their campaign work has been increasingly supplemented by young recruits from organizations like MoveOn.org.

AFTER THE 2000 election, it became fashionable to picture Republican and Democratic gains in red and blue on the national maps. Republicans invariably got the better of this visual display because they enjoyed support among the great empty spaces of the West. This election not only altered the lineup of constituent groups, but also the map of American politics. The Republicans now increasingly appear to be a regional party confined to the Deep South. While Republican support collapsed in the Northeast and eroded in the West, it remained steady in the South, where a majority of voters approved of the way George W. Bush has handled his presidency and the war in Iraq. In the new national political map—most clearly seen when states are colored according to their governors—the Northeast, Midwest, and Southern border states of Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas are overwhelmingly blue. The Plains and Rocky Mountain states are a mixed palette, but more blue than red, with Democratic governors in Oklahoma, Kansas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Montana. Alone among these regions, the Deep South from South Carolina to Georgia and across to Mississippi is dark red.

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Republican support in the South is due to the high percentage of white evangelicals, the virtual absence of unions, the widespread dependence (in states like Georgia) on military spending, and the lingering legacy of civil rights strife, which divides the parties along racial lines. But, as Thomas Schaller suggests in *Whistling Past Dixie*, the Republicans' success in the South can prove their undoing elsewhere, as voters in the West recoil from the GOP's close identification with the religious right and voters in the Northeast look askance at governors who owe their elections to support for the Confederate flag. In the 1980s, Ronald Reagan was able to establish the Republicans as America's party. But Reagan's party was of the Sun Belt, not of the South. The new party of Bush and Karl Rove is increasingly that of the Southern Bible Belt.

For the Democrats to succeed Republicans as America's party, its leaders must recognize what it took to build this majority. A Democratic majority in this country must include Massachusetts and Colorado, Ohio and Oregon; fervid Democratic partisans, youthful activists who despise Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman, and political independents alienated from government; suburban professionals who give money to the National Organization for Women and NARAL; and white workers who worry that politicians will take their guns away. In this election, the Bush administration's failure in Iraq and the corruption of the Republican Congress allowed this heterogeneous group to find a temporary home in the Democratic Party. But it will take all the ingenuity and craft that Democrats can muster to turn this halfway house into a permanent residence for a long-term Democratic majority. ■

Evangelicals v. Mormons.

Sects Appeal

BY MOLLY WORTHEN

PALMYRA, NEW YORK, IS a small town on the Erie Canal, 20 miles east of Rochester. It's not much different than the rest of the sleepy towns of western New York, save for one accident of history. In 1823, an angel named Moroni supposedly visited a 17-year-old farmer named Joseph Smith and directed him to a hill just south of Palmyra, where he later dug up the golden plates containing the text of the Book of Mormon. Nearly 200 years later, the religion that Smith founded, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS)—better known as the Mormons—boasts over five million believers in the United States and over eleven million worldwide. For one week every July, several thousand of them travel to Palmyra to watch the Hill Cumorah Pageant: a show of epic battles, wailing prophets, and the founding moments of their faith.

This year's show, which begins at nightfall, features over 600 Mormon volunteers—a cast so large that each member is assigned a barcode to keep track of his costume and rehearsal schedule. The actors, dressed in vibrant tunics and beaded headdresses, brandishing spears, swords, and other props thought to authentically represent the ancient Mesoamerican peoples in the Book of Mormon, swarm an immense stage erected on the hill. The pageant begins with the emigration of Lehi, the Mormons' Israelite ancestor, to the New World and concludes with Joseph Smith's revelation of the restored gospel. Special effects punctuate each scene: Ten-foot-high flames engulf Mormon martyrs and cast an eerie orange glow on surrounding trees; thundering cascades of water backlit with red floodlights give the effect of flowing lava and other divine punishments. The audience is rapt as Jesus flies in from above, suspended in a harness—a literal deus ex machina.

Not everyone at the pageant, however, is there to watch the show. Tom Jones, 62, a compact, spry man with a silver crew cut and square jaw, stands beside the road leading to the pageant and quietly offers pamphlets with titles like "What the Mormon Church Really Thinks of Christ." Like the blond boy obediently waving a placard printed with the words MICKEY MOUSE—SANTA CLAUS—ANGEL MORONI, and the women in long floral jumpers holding signs that say FALSE RELIGION DAMNS!, Jones is an evangelical Christian who views the pageant as a spectacle that lures the uninformed into a false religion. "Mormon tactics are so utterly deceptive," he says. "We are rescuing the innocent before they can be deceived."

Ever since the founding of the LDS church in 1830, conservative Christians have sought to discredit the Mormon church as a blasphemous cult. They have worked to squelch the political ambitions of its adherents, from Joseph Smith himself, who made a quixotic bid for the White House in 1844, to Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, who ran for the Republican nomination in 2000. No Mormon presidential candidate has ever posed a real threat—until Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. The buzz about his potential 2008 candidacy has been growing for several months now, especially as the star of the early Republican favorite, George Allen, has dimmed. Conservative columnist Cal Thomas wrote in July that he is troubled that "so many people would think a person's faith—whether one shares it or not—should be the only reason to deny someone the presidency." In an interview this summer with Jackson, Mississippi's *Clarion-Ledger*, Jerry Falwell predicted that, if Romney is "pro-life, pro-family, I don't think he'll have any problem getting the support of evangelical Christians." Romney might be the first Mormon candidate who mainstream evangelicals can support.

Molly Worthen is a graduate student in religious history at Yale University and the author of THE MAN ON WHOM NOTHING WAS LOST: THE GRAND STRATEGY OF CHARLES HILL.

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The protesters at Hill Cumorah would disagree. Although they seem like the lunatic fringe, Jones and his number represent an entrenched anti-Mormon movement that is prepared to convince voters that Romney's religion renders his campaign promises and political record moot. There is an earthly component to their antagonism: Competition for souls is an important part of the conflict between these two mission-focused faiths. More important, anti-Mormonism flows from conservative Christian psychology and from deep-rooted Christian attitudes toward the nature of faith and truth.

Tom Jones knows this battle well. He fights it in his own home, the headquarters of his St. Petersburg, Florida, ministry. What sets him apart from the other protesters at Hill Cumorah is that Jones—easily spotted at the pageant this year in a yellow T-shirt and a fanny pack stuffed with anti-Mormon tracts—is married to a practicing Mormon.

EVERY ONCE IN a great while, when Tom Jones can't hold it in any longer, he'll sit down and write his wife, Libit, a love letter. A 51-year-old watercolor artist with curly black hair and a taste for gauzy blouses, Libit recalls these notes with a sad smile. "The letters say things like, 'I love you and don't want you to go to hell, and I wish you'd examine some of these truths,' " she says. "His letters don't start in argument. They're written in love—and they're where I learn about the latest attack on Mormonism. But nothing he has shown me has made me doubt." Sometimes, Libit comes along on the annual drive to Palmyra. This year, while Tom spent his days planning outreach strategies in the basement of a Baptist church, she went shopping and visited an herb garden with friends, always toting her pet chihuahua, Picasso.

Tom is quietly hopeful that he will convert his wife. "I think the cumulative effect of all the stuff I've piled on, the documentation, the reality—down deep it has to be making a dent," he says. "And yet, I don't dare allow myself to get excited about the possibility of her recanting Mormonism. She acts like it's water off a duck's back."

Jones's organization, Christian Research & Counsel, is one of dozens of anti-Mormon groups—ranging from hobbyists, who manage websites from their living rooms, to professional ministries with full-time staff members that publish books, newsletters, and documentaries and send protesters to the opening of every new LDS temple or ward (the LDS equivalent of a parish). Some organizations, such as the Institute for Religious Research in Grand Rapids, Michigan, run mentoring programs for Mormons who want to leave the church. A group called Mission to Mormons maintains a revisionist exhibition on Mormon history in Nauvoo, Illinois, an important site in the church's early history. Tactics range from sophisticated theological arguments to junior-high lunchroom name-calling: One anti-Mormon site refers to its chief opponents as "annoying, smelley [sic] trolls." At the Hill Cumorah Pageant, too, methods vary. Jones's volunteers prefer to stand quietly with tracts and signs. On the other side of the road, street preachers—mostly middle-aged, unshaven men with Bible verses printed on their baseball caps—screech through megaphones, wave Mormon temple garments in the air, and hoist signs that say ASK ME WHY YOU DESERVE HELL.

One day, early in pageant week, a volunteer named Calvin Arnt stands in a spot of shade, manning a table stacked with pamphlets. He is a high school civics teacher from Ontario who has spent many years in missionary work—on one trip, he went door-to-door among fundamentalist Mormon communities in the Southwest, where polygamy is still the norm. Today, he stands quietly, watching packs of tourists and combing his long ponytail with his fingers. He wears his hair long to facilitate authenticity in another one of his passions, Revolutionary War reenactment.

A gaggle of teenage girls pauses at the table. They eye the stacks of pamphlets and trade glances. One asks Arnt whether he's ever read the Book of Mormon.

"I have," he says. "Which version do you mean?" Arnt launches into a comparison of the successive revisions Joseph Smith made to the text. This proves that the Mormon scripture was a human invention, he says. "No city mentioned in the Book of Mormon can be proven to have ever existed. You have to think with your brain, not your feelings and emotions." He draws an analogy between the Book of Mormon and a deceptive boyfriend "who says he'll love you forever, then gets you pregnant."

The girls look repelled. Finally, their leader—a blonde who wears a Brigham Young University (BYU) visor—says that, whenever she has a tough question about her faith, she doesn't look for proof: "That's when I go down on my knees and pray about it." Another volunteer, a soft-spoken landscaper named Brad White, lets out a sigh after arguing with a Mormon man for ten minutes. "I just couldn't get him to the point of reason," he said.

AS VIOLENT PERSECUTION drove Joseph Smith and his followers farther west, he declared himself "King, Priest, and Ruler over Israel on Earth" and treated Mormon territory as a sovereign city-state, angering local and federal authorities. His revelations grew increasingly outlandish, including the doctrine of plural marriage. Although the LDS Church discontinued the practice in 1890, the image of Mormons as polygamous theocrats continues to color their reputation. But conservative Christians' opposition to Mormonism, while historically a reaction to Smith's violation of cultural taboos, is also rooted in theology. Most Christians believe that the scriptural canon of the Old and New Testaments has been closed since roughly the end of the fourth century. Smith committed grave heresy when he added three scriptures based on his own revelations: the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Between 1830 and his assassination in 1844, Smith also taught a theology that departed radically from traditional Christianity. Mormons believe that God was once a man

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THEN AND NOW

Necessity For A New Approach to Stop Genocide— The Gates' Approach?

"Necessity may well be called The Mother of Invention – but Calamity is the Test of Integrity" Samuel Richardson (1689-1776) British novelist

1948-1994 – Undeveloped countries' Health Care was allowing millions to die from inadequate care. Bill and Melinda Gates, seeing the Necessity of aid to developing countries to avoid this Calamity, showed their Integrity by forming the Gates Foundation to provide Health Care.

2006 – Total Health Aid to developing countries from governments, international organizations, and private sources is expected to be at least 12 Billion. The Gates Foundation, within 10 years of its formation, will contribute approximately 3 Billion (1/4 of the world's total contribution).

1948 – The U.N. adopted the Genocide Accords to prevent future Genocides.

1948-2006 – Millions have been killed. The American Presidents have not taken any action. Carter in Cambodia, Reagan and Bush in northern Iraq, Bush and Clinton in Bosnia, Clinton in Rwanda. Bush in Darfur has issued "stern words" but to date no action. 450,000 killed. Example of no action: Srebrenica, Bosnia, a U.N. Safe Haven. Judge Riad of the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague stated:

"The evidence ... described scenes of unimaginable savagery, thousands of men executed and buried in mass graves, hundreds of men buried alive, men and women mutilated and slaughtered, children killed before their mothers' eyes... These are truly scenes from Hell... "

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." (Attributed Burke)

"If the world's leading governments are indifferent to genocide, the U.N. should not act as the vehicle for token interventions to hide their shame." Washington Post Editorial, Dec. 20, 1999

Polls taken during the Bosnian war indicated that, while most Americans opposed unilateral American intervention, when asked how they would react if a U.N. commission decided that events in Bosnia and Rwanda constituted genocide, 80 percent said they would favor intervention in both places.

We cannot allow the U.N. and our Political Leaders to determine our Integrity and the need to act to stop Genocide. A private foundation is needed to raise money to fund an organization to direct economic and military assets to combat Genocide. The Gates Foundation raised 60 Billion Dollars for World Health in 10 years. What amount can 80% of the people in the U.S. raise to stop Genocide?

The Foreign Relations Comm. on Dec. 20, 1943 in recommending a plan to save the Jews in Europe stated, *"We have talked: we have sympathized: we have expressed our horror; the time to act is long past due."*

Darfur: 450,000 Killed Since 2003 and Ongoing

Again the Time to Act is Long Past Due. Who Has The Integrity to Act Now?

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and that he still occupies a body of flesh and bone. Every human being is a spirit-child of God who can become a god in the afterlife by adhering to Mormon moral codes and participating in temple rituals. The head of their church is a living prophet through whom God continues to communicate with new revelation. Most Christians, by contrast, believe that God's revelation ended with the death of John, the last evangelist.

Mormon theology closes the gap between humankind and God, and it elevates the place of human effort in the path to salvation. To most Christians—especially to nineteenth-century Calvinists, who viewed humans as depraved beings separated from God by a chasm of sin—Mormonism was a scandal. It still is. "The Mormons have a different Jesus," says Ed Decker, an ex-Mormon whose ministry, Saints Alive in Jesus, is one of the largest and most aggressive in the anti-Mormon movement. "God means something else to Mormons."

The pamphleteers at Hill Cumorah agree wholeheartedly. Many of their tracts list contradictions between Mormon theology and the teachings of the Bible. But they also spend a good deal of time trying to make their case within the framework of secular science. They have tracts and videocassettes, with titles like "The Bible vs. The Book of Mormon," packed with archaeological proof and scholarly testimony that the Mormon church is founded on imagination, not fact. Evangelicals' bafflement at Mormon faith seems a bit odd, considering that, for born-again Christians, life's most important moment is a personal encounter with Christ: an experience unimpeachable by logic or scientific method. Yet the conservative Christian fixation on "proof" has deep roots.

To strict Calvinists, the ancestors of modern American evangelicals, theology was a practical science devoted to discerning objective truth. By the nineteenth century, these theologians had to respond to the challenge that religion was not "true" in the same way that science is. To debate humanist philosophers on their own terms, they developed a rationalist style and an evidentialist approach to scripture. But, while conservative Calvinists adopted the language of science to defend biblical inerrancy, they shrank from a second challenge: that of the German historical critics, who marshaled the latest historical and literary research to challenge the authority of the Bible. Conservative theologians crouched behind the creed of *sola scriptura*—"by scripture alone"—the mantra of the Protestant Reformation. They eschewed history and theological tradition, focusing only on biblical text. The combined effect of these two developments was to produce an evangelical Christianity obsessed with logic and scientific proof—but only when such evidence confirmed a literal reading of the Bible.

These twin phenomena help explain several things about the differing worldviews of evangelical Christians and Mormons. First, they reveal why conservative Christians perceive no intellectual dishonesty in citing radical, discredited statements by old Mormon leaders in their anti-Mormon literature. Evangelicals refuse all claims that the LDS Church has changed over time because they have little conception of change in their own Christianity, which they believe is precisely faithful to the practices of Jesus's apostles.

Second, while most Mormons take their scriptures literally—believing that God will someday reveal historical proof that the events in the Book of Mormon actually happened—the question of "evidence" is, for most, beside the point. "Mormons are deeply interested in the rational evidence for their beliefs, but they are under no illusion that they can scientifically demonstrate the conclusions to a skeptical audience," says Richard Bushman, a Mormon scholar and emeritus professor of history at Columbia University. "In the end, faith is faith, not science."

Mormon ease with a fantastic story presents an intellectual problem for evangelical Christians—for example, in the debate between advocates of intelligent design and Darwinism. Many evangelicals view evolution as a contradiction of the true history of the world's creation as recorded in the Bible. But, while some Mormons are uneasy about evolution, its principles are taught in biology class at BYU, and many believe that evolution and the Bible are compatible. This is due largely to the Mormons' more flexible notion of scripture. "Mormons believe that God allowed Joseph Smith to edit language, to paste and clip revelations," Bushman says. "Revelation is current. ... Not a lot is at stake for us in maintaining the inerrancy of the Bible."

ALMOST 30 YEARS ago, when Libit met Tom after taking a job at his advertising company, religion wasn't a problem for them. Libit's parents had converted to Mormonism when she was six, but teenage rebellion had pulled her away from the church. Tom had grown up Baptist but was no longer a serious churchgoer.

Shortly before they married, both felt the need to go to church again. "She feigned interest in visiting other churches—she said she wanted to look around—and one was the Mormon church," Tom says. "She wanted to lead me back there, I'm certain." Tom was open-minded at first. He invited LDS missionaries to their home. Then a friend gave him a book that portrayed the faith as an anti-Christian cult. "I had no idea—I was reading the Book of Mormon," he says. "I was even foolish enough to pray about it." Soon, Tom began volunteering with an evangelical outreach group at the Hill Cumorah Pageant. "When he told me what he was going to do up here [in Palmyra], it broke my heart," Libit says. "It felt like he was cheating on me. I don't think I've ever been so devastated."

In 1993, Tom retired from the advertising business, and, by 1996, anti-Mormon ministry had become his full-time preoccupation. He is convinced that many Mormons don't understand what their church really believes—and that those few who do try to conceal the shocking truth. He considers it his duty to "inoculate" the unsuspecting, at Hill Cumorah and in his everyday life. His wife no longer invites

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him to her church's social events. "Any time my wife invites me to a Mormon thing, and I see a visitor there, she knows that visitor is fair game for me," he explains. "I do everything I can to rescue them from their Mormon hosts, and I'll risk anything."

Libit recalled an incident at a church Christmas party some years ago: She and Tom ran into another woman whose husband is not a Mormon. He asked Tom why he wasn't a member. "He didn't know what he was getting into," says Libit. Tom lurked quietly until the man left to use the bathroom, then followed him inside. "Tom knows how to behave himself, but others don't realize that what they say, he might perceive as a question," she says. "So I just don't take him."

Despite their religious divide, Tom and Libit have made their marriage work for over two decades—by loving unconditionally and compartmentalizing when need be. Occasionally, when a reporter calls with questions about his work, Tom takes the phone call in his car, so that his wife won't hear. Life is made simpler by their decision not to have children. There was a time, early in their marriage, when they discussed the possibility, and "everything was tiki-boo until the subject of religion came up," Tom recalls. "Obviously, she wanted to raise the child in the Mormon church, and I said, 'Over my dead body.' "

Libit stopped reading Tom's tracts long ago. Her approach is not unlike that of her church, which prefers to ignore its critics and put its energy into evangelizing and expanding. The Mormon church stages spectacular and popular pageants in Nauvoo and at temples in California, Arizona, and Utah, although Hill Cumorah is the biggest. "You've got to admit, it's a fantastic performance," says Larry Craft, a Rochester evangelist who attended this year's Hill Cumorah Pageant. "I give them credit for that. They're very professional."

IT IS PRECISELY the church's professionalism and skillful image-management that worry many conservative Christians. In contrast to HBO's polygamist family drama "Big Love" and Jon Krakauer's searing portrait of Mormon fundamentalists in *Under the Banner of Heaven*, the Mormon church has tried to position itself in the mainstream by conducting a careful marketing campaign. In 1982, the church added the official subtitle "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" to the Book of Mormon in order to emphasize that it was a Christian faith. In 1995, the LDS Church logo was redesigned so that the words "Jesus Christ" appear three times larger than the rest of the text. The current prophet and president of the LDS Church, Gordon Hinckley, has made high-profile statements that seem to downplay the radical elements of Mormon theology. "It is in part a p.r. campaign," says Catholic theologian Richard John Neuhaus. "But there are also serious Mormon thinkers who are engaged in a long-term theological project aimed at something like a rapprochement between LDS doctrine and the mainstream of the Christian tradition."

Some hopeful evangelical scholars think that, within a few generations, Mormons will shed their radical doctrines for mainstream Protestantism and Mormonism will have more meaning as a cultural identity than as a distinct religion. BYU history professor Robert Millet hopes the interfaith dialogue will correct misunderstandings about Mormonism, but he says it is a question of emphasis, not change. "I have seen a kind of refinement, a greater focus now on Christ and the atonement—not for p.r. reasons, but because it was there in our documents all along," he says.

But, for conservative Christians, this rebranding of Mormonism as a mainstream Christian faith is a threatening and duplicitous move, especially considering the church's high conversion and birth rates. They have continued their efforts to marginalize the LDS Church: In 2004, Shirley Dobson, the wife of Focus on the Family founder James Dobson, refused the Mormons' request to be included in the annual National Day of Prayer. In October of this year, Dobson himself—considered by some observers the most influential figure on the Christian right—said on national radio that he doubted a Mormon could earn evangelical votes. Some view Mitt Romney's candidacy as the latest—and most aggressive—step in the Mormon p.r. campaign to convince Americans that Mormonism is just another denomination of Christianity. "There is the perception that, if Mormonism is legitimized at that level, many American Protestants will become Mormon," says Greg Johnson, an ex-Mormon who now leads efforts in Mormon-evangelical dialogue.

Romney, who has balanced the Massachusetts budget, reformed health care, and stuck to his conservative social beliefs, is aware of this perception. Over the last few months, he has made several efforts to meet with conservative Christians and convince them that he shares their most sacred moral and social positions—such as opposition to abortion and gay marriage—no matter his theology. As a result, one can detect a mild surge of support on sites like evangelicalsformitt.com.

But many more conservative Christians blanch at the idea of any cooperation with Mormons, let alone the endorsement of a Mormon for the nation's highest office. The protesters at the Hill Cumorah Pageant insist that Christianity is incompatible with Mormonism. Talk of a Mormon president brings shudders, gasps, and predictions of a return to the theocracy of the Mormons' nineteenth-century Great Basin Kingdom. Asked why he would not vote for Romney, Jim Robertson, who runs an anti-Mormon ministry in Arizona, puts evangelical fears in stark terms. "The Mormon goal," he says, "is to take over the world."

Yet the case of Tom and Libit Jones suggests that, even under the most strenuous circumstances, a Mormon-evangelical relationship can work—although each will always compete for the other's soul. "We share the same politics, the same morals, and we both try to live a Christ-like life," Libit says. "Still, I'm always praying for him, for us, and waiting." ■

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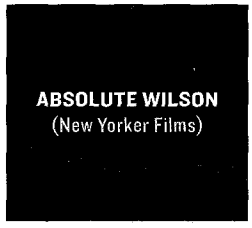
BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Making His Way

THE DIRECTOR KATHARINA Otto-Bernstein obviously won Robert Wilson's confidence. In her excellent documentary about him, he speaks candidly, winningly, and often wittily about his life and work. Otto-Bernstein, too, must have a sense of humor. She called her film ABSOLUTE WILSON, and though the title makes a certain sense, few artists of our time have had less to do with absolutes.



A film about this theater artist is a good idea for three reasons. For nearly four decades, Wilson has occupied a high place in the international theater world, and those who have admired or disliked his work will have their feelings supported by this picture. Those who have read about his work but have not had the chance to see it will get generous samples here. And those who may not have a strong interest in the theater can discover how Wilson relates to the avant-garde in general.

Wilson was born in Texas in 1941 to parents who were friendly in a picky way. A childhood stutter made him miserable and presumably fostered his later interest in communication without words. (Links between his childhood and his work recur in the film.) His youth was uncomfortable, chiefly because of his lack of self-knowledge; there was a suicide attempt and a session in a mental hospital. Then he got the chance to do a production of some sort with deaf children, and this experience opened marvelous possibilities of contrariness for him.

To give just the outline of Wilson's career: he came to New York in 1963, studied design, began production work, and in an incredibly short time had made a reputation as a director—through the scope of his vision and the abundance with which he fulfilled it. Very soon the prime maxim about him arrived: he was a painter who worked with theater means instead of with brush and paint. He certainly was uninterested in traditional technique and form, or in dramatic suspense. (One of the first books that dealt with him, edited by Bonnie Marranca, was called *The Theater of Images*.) His object was not pictorial beauty, although there was plenty of it; he used contrasting volumes of space and color and light for the evocation of wonder and a rare sort of pleasure, rather than traditional excitement.

The first time I became aware of Wilson was in 1970, when talk of his productions in Europe began to spread. (Many of his productions were expensive, and as Susan Sontag notes in the film, he often had to work abroad in order to get subsidy.) His first widely noted production was done outdoors in Iran: there was only one performance, which lasted one week. (To be ultra-clear: the one performance was a week long.) A member of the cast interviewed for this film said that they all had to make do with two or three hours of sleep a night—or day. Soon came word that a production of his in Paris, called *Deafman Glance*, was in the Wilsonian sense very successful and brought a long letter of praise from Louis Aragon, whose own art could hardly have been more distant from Wilson's.

I missed that production when it came to New York, but I saw some of *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin*—only some of it, because it ran from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., and after two and a half hours, though quite unbored, I felt too replete to absorb more. During that time, a photo of Stalin was displayed briefly, but there was no other reference to him. Wilson apparently used his title not as a deception but as a springboard. The springing went far from Moscow, in a series of striking images that seemed to suggest one another. At one point, among the wildly varied components, some twenty black women and men dressed as stereotypical mammies came out and circled to the "Blue Danube," then disappeared.

In the next two decades, I saw many more of Wilson's productions—much shorter ones—and was sometimes overwhelmed, sometimes merely patient. He often worked with an autistic boy whose presence seemed exploitative to some (including me), but Wilson apparently intended it as part of his unlimited embrace. He wrote an opera with Philip Glass called *Einstein on the Beach*, which was done at the Metropolitan Opera House and which I saw twice. (Skimpy compared with the forty visits by Sontag.) Some of those productions are excerpted in the film, along with many that I have not seen, with comments by Wilson that are often enlightening. (He brought his grandmother from Texas to Paris to play Victoria in *A Letter to Queen Victoria*, and when she arrived, she said she hoped she didn't have to learn any lines. It would be too much: she took nine pills a day just to keep alive. Wilson replied, "Grandmother, just say what you just said.")

In 1979, Wilson was engaged to do a production for Peter Stein's Schaubühne in Berlin, then one of Europe's prime theaters. In New York, I met an actress in that company who would be in the production, who said that she couldn't wait to work with Wilson. I asked her why, since he had nothing to do with the company's usual methods. She said, in effect, that she was tired of large trajectories in feeling and theme, and that she wanted to work with someone who would just tell her what he wanted her to do with her hands. I remembered her when, in this film, Wilson rehearses Isabelle Huppert in *Orlando* on the positioning of one hand.

Absolute Wilson made me especially regret that I have never seen a Wilson production of a fixed work, one that he could not easily reshape to his impulse—such as the operas he has staged around the world, including *Das Rheingold*, *Ma-*

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dama Butterfly, and *Lohengrin*. Some ten years ago, I did see him in a one-person production of *Hamlet*, which was not his peak. It pitilessly underscored his disregard of technique, as when at other times he did solo dancing. Still, his productions of standard works might have helped my residual view: he very often evokes high admiration, but he very rarely moves me. Perhaps his treatment of a standard work might alter this response.

For those who know Wilson's work and for those who may meet him here, this film presents a question of interest in all arts, a persistent question. What are artists to *do* in an age with few credible compass points? The matter besets serious artists of all kinds. From the beginning, however, Wilson ignored the absence of compass points. Without regard for tradition or anti-tradition, he plunged into himself, his imagination, his vitality, his quirks, and has progressed through them. His work is not always engrossing, but it is always unique, with no aesthetic obligations to the past or present.

This film is a valuable signet of Wilson's carefully articulated independence. As a wry note about the dilemma that he has ignored, the music under the closing credits is from Nino Rota's score for *8½*—a film about an artist who had to struggle toward creation. ■

Steven Hahn
Homegrown Terror

REDEMPTION: THE LAST BATTLE OF THE CIVIL WAR
By Nicholas Lemann
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 257 pp., $24)

COLFAX, LOUISIANA WAS scarcely a town in 1873. It was more a collection of buildings on a plantation owned by William Calhoun. As much as any site in the former Confederate South, however, Colfax came to embody the complex political dynamics of Reconstruction, and the troubling relation of terror and democracy in the history of the United States.

Lying in the heart of the state's lush Red River Valley, Colfax was the newly designated seat of the newly created Grant Parish, carved out by Louisiana's Republican government in 1868 to weaken the Democrats' hold in the countryside and fittingly named to honor the party's sitting president and vice president, Ulysses S. Grant and Schuyler Colfax. One of Calhoun's stables served as the local courthouse, and the expectation was that, with a small black majority, the Republicans could control the parish government and send the party's representatives to the state legislature.

Unfortunately, the only thing predictable about politics in Reconstruction Louisiana was its unpredictability. In 1872, U.S. troops were needed to fend off a Democratic coup d'état in New Orleans and keep the governorship and the statehouse in Republican hands; several months later, up in Grant Parish, Republican officeholders (mostly black, and led by William Ward, a tough Union Army veteran and state militia officer) were holed up behind hastily built barricades at the courthouse in Colfax with about four or five hundred of their black constituents. Rival white Democratic claimants, reinforced by gun-toting vigilantes from neighboring parishes, had put them to siege, and on Easter Sunday, April 13, they delivered the ultimatum. Two hours later the battle was over. The courthouse was in flames, and by the time state and federal officials arrived on the scene the next day, more than one hundred African Americans were dead, forty of whom had surrendered and, in a nearby cotton field that night, were executed by the whites.

The Colfax massacre was perhaps the bloodiest episode in the very bloody course of Reconstruction, and its telling serves as the prologue to Nicholas Lemann's arresting new book. *Redemption* is the story of the violent overthrow of Reconstruction in Louisiana and Mississippi in the mid-1870s. Although the story is well known to historians of the period—and not very much new is uncovered here—it is less familiar to the general public and is usually appended to larger treatments of the Reconstruction era. In Lemann's hands, the episode stands chillingly on its own, as an account of the possibilities that the Civil War and Reconstruction heralded, and of the failure of our democratic institutions to advance, or even to defend, those possibilities.

In this sense, "redemption" is a decidedly ironic term here, and a play on words. It was the term used by white Southerners, particularly white supremacists, to commemorate the destruction of what they regarded as the vile imposition of "Negro" and "carpetbag" rule in the post–Civil War South. Those who led the assault and then grabbed the reins of power were celebrated (and celebrated themselves) as the "redeemers." Lemann's sympathies are wholly different. But by embracing the white supremacist nomenclature (as other historians have also done), he makes the paradoxes and the contradictions—and the horrors—all the more vivid.

WHAT THE WHITE SUPREMACISTS scorned was the most breathtaking democratic revolution in the nineteenth-century world. In the cauldron of the Civil War, the largest and most powerful slave regime in the Americas was defeated militarily, and slavery was abolished without direct compensation to slaveowners. This alone distinguished the American experience from every other servile society of the time, save for Haiti. Then, responding to the wartime service of black soldiers, the demands of radicals of both races, and the political needs of the Republican Party, the federal government extended civil and political rights to former slaves on the same basis as those rights were enjoyed by whites, and set the stage for the reorganization of politics and government in the former Confederacy.

This revolution is known as Radical Reconstruction. The Republican Party, for the first time, moved into the Southern states. African Americans registered to vote in overwhelming numbers and, through the vehicles of Union Leagues,

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churches, and Republican Party clubs, mobilized new political communities. State constitutions, which created new civil and political societies and new public sectors, were written and ratified. And elections were held with a dramatically expanded electorate, resulting in Republican governments at the state and local levels. Most of the officeholders were white men who had been on the political margins before the Civil War; but in the Deep South states of South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana and in the plantation districts stretching from Virginia to Texas, African Americans—many of whom had just been freed from slavery—came to serve as state representatives and senators, and as magistrates, county commissioners, surveyors, treasurers, and occasionally sheriffs.

Before long, the Republican regimes were rebuilding the economic infrastructures of the South, establishing systems of public education open to blacks and whites (separately, for the most part), setting up new social services, reforming the tax structure (sometimes with a view to making land available to former slaves), and, when possible, attacking various forms of racial discrimination. Equally consequential, in the counties and the parishes, the regimes constructed judicial systems in which blacks could bring suits, testify in courts, and serve on juries, and thus in which black laborers could resist the exploitative practices of their employers through legal means. Never in the history of the United States, and rarely in the history of any other nation, were the balances of power shifted so markedly away from the propertied elite and toward the working class.

Had the former Confederates accepted the new rules of the political game, something amounting to a genuine democracy, involving both races, might have taken root in the South. But instead they regarded the civil enfranchisement and the political empowerment of African Americans as the grossest of illegitimacies and the direst of threats, and they mobilized militarily in opposition. Initially through vigilante bands such as the Ku Klux Klan, and eventually through paramilitary organizations closely tied to the Democratic Party, they sought to destroy blacks' capacity to engage in politics. They broke up Union Leagues, harassed black voters, assassinated black leaders, and, when Republicans won local elections, tried to prevent them from taking office or to drive them out once they began to serve. This was what the white supremacists were up to in Colfax in 1873, and this was how they decided to put an end to Republican rule more generally in Louisiana and Mississippi in what Lemann calls "the last battle of the Civil War."

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THERE WERE MANY ACTORS IN the great and tragic drama of redemption, black as well as white. Lemann chooses to develop his narrative around one of them. He is Adelbert Ames, the Reconstruction governor of Mississippi who had to face down the paramilitary challenge. Ames had nothing to do with Colfax, though he would be deeply engaged with similar situations in Mississippi, in Vicksburg, Yazoo City, and Clinton. And he seemed to have been about as well equipped to do so as anyone who could have been in his place.

Ames was born in 1835 and raised in Maine. Although his father was a sea captain, he secured an appointment to West Point, where, ironically, Robert E. Lee was then superintendent. Graduating in 1861, Ames was immediately placed in command of Union troops, and over the course of the war he saw action at Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Petersburg, and Fort Fisher. By war's end he had attained the rank of brigadier general, won the Medal of Honor, and caught the notice of General Grant. Before long, Grant appointed him both commander of the Fourth Military District (created by the Reconstruction Acts of 1867) and provisional governor of Mississippi, which Ames parlayed into his election to the U.S. Senate in 1870.

Ames wasted little time finding his way into Washington's inner circle, and, in a scenario worthy of a Gore Vidal novel, he met and married Blanche Butler, the daughter of the Massachusetts congressman and former Union Army general Benjamin F. Butler. It was a very rapid ascent, and Ames seemed to relish his position and his status. But his senatorial tenure was at risk. He had not really established a political base in Mississippi—he did not even have a residence there—and he would have to depend on the state legislature for reelection. (This was the practice before the Constitution was amended to establish direct election of senators in 1913.) So Ames determined, much to his wife's chagrin, to return to Mississippi and run for governor. In the fall of 1873, several months after the Colfax massacre, he won the election owing to a massive turnout of black voters.

Ames was neither a visionary nor a radical. He shared many of the racial prejudices of white Americans, and in the early days of Reconstruction he did not even support black suffrage. But, as Lemann recounts, Ames was an idealist of sorts, and he seemed to grow into his role as a Mississippi Republican in close association with African Americans. He had seen the violence inflicted upon the newly freed slaves by Southern whites intent on enforcing their submission, and he imagined a new future for what had been a slave society. As Ames took office, Lemann writes, he "laid out for the people of Mississippi ... a dream of a government that would create a public education system good enough to defeat the illiteracy that pervaded the state; that would operate on a sound financial basis; that would find a way to turn the former slaves from peasants into landowning farmers." It was a personal metamorphosis—with many parallels among young Northerners of the era—that only participation in revolutionary warfare could facilitate.

But in history timing can be everything, and Ames could hardly have chosen a worse time to assume the governorship of Mississippi. A financial panic in 1873 set the American economy on a downward course to depression, taking out whatever wind was left in the sails of Reconstruction idealism in the North. Paramilitary groups were mobilizing for battle in several states, including Mississippi, where they were known as the "White Line" movement. And President Grant was increasingly reluctant to send federal troops to defend Republican officeholders in the South, having been re-elected on a platform proclaiming "Let Us Have Peace."

Ames had hardly settled into office before he faced a crisis of democratic rule in Vicksburg, where black majorities

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had enabled Republicans to win election to both the municipal and county offices. White Liners created havoc in the city that summer, hoping to keep blacks away from the polls during the August city election, and then set their sights on the county officers, chief among them the black sheriff and Union Army veteran Peter Crosby. Crosby was forced to resign his office and was briefly imprisoned by Democratic paramilitaries. Ames had a difficult time convincing Grant to send military aid.

IT WAS A BAD OMEN. THE NEXT year, 1875, would see a statewide campaign for control of the legislature, with the fate of Reconstruction—not to mention the senatorial ambitions of Adelbert Ames—in the balance. Emboldened by their success in Vicksburg, by the hesitation of Grant, and by the national elections of 1874, which put Democrats in charge of the House of Representatives for the first time since the Civil War, White Liners looked to complete their work "at all hazards." They put violence, intimidation, and assassinations to concerted use in counties thought to be safely Republican, in some cases driving out duly elected Republicans (as they had done with Peter Crosby) or Republican candidates who stood for election. At the town of Clinton, just outside Jackson, the state capital, they provoked a riot at a large Republican meeting that left as many as fifty African Americans dead.

With the Grant administration turning a deaf ear to Ames's panicked requests for troops, he began to mobilize the state militia (called the "black militia," since few whites would serve) and to seek a deal with the Democrats to avoid further bloodshed. The ensuing "peace conference" took place in mid-October and seemed to result in an agreement: Ames would effectively disband the black militia, and the Democrats would permit blacks to vote in the election contest. Election Day passed relatively quietly, though not without incident in places where an organized Republican constituency could still be found.

But the critical deeds had already been done. "By the eve of the election," Lemann observes, "Mississippi felt to the Republicans awfully like a state that was being taken over by a relentless conquering army." Many black voters stayed home out of fear for their lives, and the Democrats claimed victory—a victory, a federal grand jury would later conclude, built on "fraud, intimidation, and violence ... without a parallel in the annals of history."

When the state legislature that Ames hoped would eventually send him back to the Senate convened in early 1876, the new Democratic majority chose a rather different course. It moved to impeach him from the governorship. And despite the efforts of his influential father-in-law to build support on his behalf, Ames had grown weary of the fight. In March, he arranged to resign his office in return for the legislature dropping the impeachment charges. Soon he was headed north, where he lived out most of his very long life.

THE WHITE LINE PARAMILITARY campaign of 1875 not only toppled Ames and the Republican government in Mississippi. It also served as a blueprint for similar campaigns in South Carolina and Louisiana the next year, completing the "redemption" process. But Lemann wants us to see redemption as more than the end of Reconstruction; he wants us to see it as "the last battle of the Civil War," a battle that the South finally won. This is Lemann's overarching theme, and in many respects it is welcome. For too long historians have celebrated the apparently amicable end to the Civil War, as Grant offered generous terms and Lee surrendered his troops, discouraging their resort to ongoing guerrilla warfare. The violence that quickly erupted in the South, much of it directed against newly freed African Americans, is either ignored or cast as part of a separate story, the story of "Reconstruction," from which the terms of the surrender seem distinct.

But such distinctions and periodizations can be misleading. The Civil War and Reconstruction very much overlapped, as the federal government had to confront the questions of redefining and rebuilding the Confederate South from the moment that Union troops first set foot on Confederate-claimed soil—all the more so since slaves acted upon their own understandings of the war and fled to Union lines as soon as they could. Grant's generous surrender terms, furthermore, allowed Confederate soldiers to return home with their weaponry, and President Andrew Johnson restored to most of them their property (except, of course, their slaves) and political rights.

Grant and Johnson may have imagined that such magnanimity would convince the Confederates to accept the outcome of the war, the authority of the federal government, and the freedom of the slaves. But rather than encouraging acceptance, federal magnanimity provoked defiance. The Confederates pardoned by Johnson acknowledged the war's result only grudgingly and incompletely; they elected many of their wartime leaders to state legislatures and congressional seats; and their new state governments moved quickly to hedge the freedom of African Americans through the passage of infamous "black codes."

Most troublingly, the Confederates responded to the federal government's magnanimity by mobilizing paramilitary groups to disarm and to discipline the freedpeople, and eventually to demolish their political power. And these groups were constructed directly out of Confederate army units. In effect, many Confederate soldiers and their officers went home, re-organized their companies, and redeployed in what can only be regarded as a guerrilla offensive. Here they had more success, defeating Reconstruction's radical initiatives, destabilizing the democratically elected Republican governments, terrorizing the freedpeople and their white allies, and ultimately regaining "home rule."

IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE, IF DISheartening, turnaround. But did it really mean that, in the end, the South won the Civil War? I think not. Although the redeemers reveled in their "triumph" over the hated "Black" Republicans, their victory was, in truth, a hollow one, permitted by the Republican Party itself, which had won the big battle whose goals were clear—the unconditional defeat of the Confederate rebellion—and conceded the one over which the Republicans had failed to reach agreement and then lost interest in: the terms of the peace. After all, by 1877 they had forced the surrender of the Confederate armies, abolished slavery, driven the South from national power, advanced their vision of political economy, and learned that they could rule the nation without the electoral support of the Southern states. The last federal troops in the South were withdrawn, and the last Reconstruction governments were allowed to fall not by a Confederate sympathizer or a Democrat, but by the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes.

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That Republicans rather than Democrats agreed to the end of Reconstruction was small comfort to African Americans. At all events, they were left to face the wrath of the redeemers with few allies in either the South or the North, and the repressive system of "Jim Crow" quickly took shape: lynchings, segregation, disfranchisement. Still, we must remember that Jim Crow had its first days not in the postbellum South, but in the antebellum North. Most states there denied free blacks the vote, and some in the Midwest tried to drive them out entirely. By the late nineteenth century, moreover, Jim Crow's social and cultural logic was embraced throughout the country. It was not, in short, that the South won the war, or even the peace; it was that issues of race, labor, and political power were steadily creating a community of interest and sympathy between elites in the North and the South that undermined support for Reconstruction and built support for white home rule.

BY VIEWING REDEMPTION AS A story of the Civil War, Lemann may miss an opportunity to take the full measure of his insights into the distressingly close relation of terror and politics throughout our history—not just in the midst of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Paramilitary groups such as the Ku Klux Klan were directly connected not only to Confederate army units, but also to antebellum militia companies and slave patrols, and thus to the means by which—along with elections and political patronage—slaveholders and large landholders established their dominance in the South. It was a sprawling universe of political activity in which democratic and violent methods were intimately linked and simultaneously practiced.

The linkage and the simultaneity were not confined to the South. Before the Civil War, American politics saw the expansion of democracy and the birth of mass parties to an extent unknown in the Atlantic world. But it also saw a range of explosive terror-laden encounters—wars against Indians, anti-abolitionist mobs, nativist riots, police actions against fugitive slaves. The war itself serves as a classic example of Clausewitz's notion of "politics by other means," and in the postwar era, as the industrial revolution intensified, the new bourgeoisie and its political representatives moved to curtail popular democracy and arm themselves against what they saw as a growing working-class threat.

Beginning in the 1870s and 1880s, efforts were made to reduce the number of elective offices, gerrymander election districts, toughen voter-registration requirements, and impose literacy tests—especially as working-class political movements, some associated with the Knights of Labor or the Greenback Labor Party, successfully contested for power. At the same time, armories were built, urban police forces were modernized, national guards were formed, and private armies were established. American labor history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was probably more strike-ridden and violence-prone than anywhere else in the Western world, and soon after *The Birth of a Nation* (which might be regarded as the popular celebration of redemption) premiered to rave reviews, including from President Woodrow Wilson, the Ku Klux Klan was reborn. By the early 1920s, the Klan, combining intimidation and vigilantism with racism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Catholicism, had developed an immense national following, even among the powerful and the well-placed.

The twentieth-century examples of political terror can easily be multiplied. Many are well known. But the point is not to suggest that somehow terror and violence overshadow democratic means in American politics. Not at all. It is rather to insist that terror and democracy have struggled in a complex embrace throughout our history, that they cannot be readily disentangled, and that their very interdependence marks the limits and the contradictions of our political process.

Political democracy has thrived in America, and its expansion has proceeded most peacefully, when the universe of potential participants was relatively homogenous as to class, gender, ethnicity, and race, and when those who would confound this universe were excluded by a mix of law, custom, and force. When the excluded sought inclusion, they often met with stiff and obdurate resistance: think of the rejection of suffrage for blacks and women in the North in the 1840s and 1850s, or the Know-Nothing attack on immigrants' rights around the same time. It usually required a national convulsion—the Civil War, World War I, and then World War II—to open the political gates, and even then the question of genuine empowerment posed challenges that established interests usually found difficult, if not impossible, to accept.

Not surprisingly, with the exception of a "golden age" between the 1930s and the 1970s, America's working classes, composed heavily of ethnic and racial minorities, have often stood in problematic relation to civil and political society. And when they have tried to flex their political muscle, either through electoral means or at the workplace, they have frequently provoked the hard fist of authority. The African Americans who organized the Republican Party in Grant Parish, Louisiana, who elected officials who represented their views, and who then faced the murderous assault of white vigilantes in Colfax on Easter Sunday 1873 did not have to be told that American politics encompassed an explosive mix of democracy and terror. They had learned this long before, as slaves. Yet we would do well to heed the lessons of their experiences. Nicholas Lemann's book will help us to do so. ■

Persia

from "Gozd in kelihi" ("Woods and Chalices"), 13-14

Hey monarch, ferry me across
the river. A nettle nips, a nettle
does not nip, a nettle

does not die from frost. We gurgle
tar, still unborn
piglet with pretty and white and long

hair, else
sorrow, sores, pain
and vertigo.

Do you also fight for her like a lion?
For screams I'm patriotic.
Sidewalks are kind.

The corners of sidewalks are kind
to invalids. To return love to the blind.
To make it dewy, to make it

seen, to make it watered by
their gazes. To return sight to the blind.
I will thrust the smell of river sand.

TOMAŽ ŠALAMUN

—translated from the Slovenian by Brian Henry

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Joseph Frank
Thinkers and Liars

AN INFAMOUS PAST:
E. M. CIORAN AND THE RISE OF FASCISM IN ROMANIA
By Marta Petreu
Translated by Bogdan Aldea
(Ivan R. Dee, 332 pp., $30)

I.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF WORLD War II, there was a great influx of refugees into the United States. Most came from countries where populations had been uprooted by the course of battle, or were escaping from a past that they were lucky to have survived. Some, however, were trying to put behind them a different kind of past—one in which they had collaborated with, or expressed sympathy for, the Axis powers that had been defeated. A notable case of this kind was that of Paul de Man, the distinguished professor of comparative literature at Yale University; another eminent instance was Mircea Eliade, the much-admired historian of religion who was chairman of the department of religion at the University of Chicago from 1957 until his death in 1986. Eliade had been a strong supporter of the Iron Guard movement, the Romanian equivalent of the Italian fascists and the German Nazis, but he attempted throughout his later career to conceal and deny his affiliation with its ideas and his service in the pro-Axis Romanian government of Marshal Ion Antonescu during the war.

Although Eliade's history has attracted little attention in the United States, he appears, under a fictitious name, in Saul Bellow's novel *Ravelstein*. It is well known that the character Ravelstein is a fictional portrait of the late Allan Bloom, a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago and the author of the best-selling book *The Closing of the American Mind*. Another professor at the university is a Romanian-born historian of religion, Radu Grielescu, with an even greater international reputation than that of Ravelstein, and obviously based on Eliade. The narrator of the novel, who may be roughly identified with the author, is married to a Romanian woman. (One of Bellow's wives was in fact a Romanian mathematician—in the novel she is an astronomer—and his earlier novel *The Dean's December* is set in Bucharest.) The couple are flatteringly cultivated by the highly civilized Grielescu, and a minor motif of the book is the futile protest of Ravelstein against what he correctly divines as the efforts of Grielescu to ingratiate himself with the narrator.

Both Ravelstein and the narrator are Jewish, and the former has gotten wind that Grielescu, during the 1930s and 1940s, had been a fervent intellectual spokesman for the ferociously anti-Semitic Iron Guard movement. Indeed, he had "denounced the Jewish syphilis that had infected the high civilization of the Balkans." During the war he had served the pro-fascist Romanian government in its embassies in England and Portugal; and he lived in fear that his previous Iron Guard affiliations and sympathies would become known. "Grielescu is using you," Ravelstein tells the narrator. "In his own country he was a fascist, and he needs you to cover this up here." The narrator admits that he had never posed a direct question about his past to Grielescu, but refuses to believe that he could ever have been a genuine Jew-hater.

This episode in Bellow's novel is cited in a recent French study, which has not yet appeared in English, titled *Cioran, Eliade, Ionesco: L'oubli du fascisme*, written by Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, a historian of Eastern European history and culture. This revelatory book is an extremely erudite exploration of the careers of the three writers named in the title, based largely but far from exclusively on an analysis of the little-known (and, until fairly recently, mostly inaccessible) journalistic and periodical literature in Romanian of the 1930s and 1940s. All these men were natives of that relatively obscure and distant land, and all performed the astonishing feat of becoming world-famous figures.

Eliade's books on the history of religion elevated him to a commanding height in the field, and he attained fame as a novelist both in his own country and in France. E. M. Cioran was widely hailed for his brilliantly disillusioned reflections on history and culture, written first in Romanian and then in French, and he was praised as one of the greatest contemporary stylists in his adopted language. Eugène Ionesco pioneered the vogue of the theater of the absurd, and his comic but also symbolically tragic plays were performed everywhere; eventually he was elected to the Académie Française. All three had a past that they wished to hide (though Ionesco's concealments did not arise from any sympathy with the fascist tendency that the two others fervently championed). The aim of Laignel-Lavastine's book is to investigate the truth about this past so far as it can be ascertained from the surviving documents and the testimony of contemporaries. It has now been supplemented by the appearance in English of a work exclusively devoted to Cioran, *An Infamous Past*, by the Romanian scholar and poet Marta Petreu, which was originally published in 1999.

LAIGNEL-LAVASTINE BEGINS WITH a sweeping depiction of the political and cultural atmosphere of the late 1920s in Romania, the period during which the three men she deals with came to maturity. The ideological climate of the time was defined in a series of articles by the twenty-year-old Eliade called "A Spiritual Itinerary"—a work that quickly became the lodestar of the new generation and promoted the young Eliade to the position of its leader. Sweeping aside all the ideas of the past that had been destroyed in the carnage of World War I, Eliade wrote: "The myth of indefinite progress, the faith in the aptitude and power of science and technology to establish widespread peace and social justice, the primacy of rationalism and the prestige of agnosticism, all this has been shattered to pieces in every area in which it has been contested." This criticism of rationalism, materialism, and loss of religious faith was accompanied by praise of the "life-force," and of the most extreme irrational experiences,

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as providing the source of a new realm of values.

All three men attended the University of Bucharest, the center of Romania's cultural life, where they became acquainted and competed for attention in the animated discussions that took place in the cafés of the Calei Victorei, the main artery of the city. Every conversation there was a personal challenge, and in a volume of critical articles titled *Non*, Ionesco ironically depicts the various strategies employed to make an impression. A neophyte might imitate Cioran and speak "in response to everything or with complete irrelevance," or "in a trembling voice, in which the emotion and acute interior tension were expressed as the phrases interrupted each other, cite a passage from Unamuno or Berdyaev." Matters were not so intellectually effervescent, however, for others in the university, especially those of Jewish origin.

Of primary importance in this context is the endemic anti-Semitism of Romanian culture, which has deep historic roots. Encouraged by the rise of Nazism during the 1930s, the indigenous anti-Semitism of the Iron Guard made life for Jewish students at the university a continual torment. They were assigned special seats, continually insulted verbally, and assaulted physically. Often it was necessary for police to be called in to protect them as they left the lecture halls. There is a moving passage in a novel from 1934 by Mihail Sebastian, also a playwright and for a time a member of Eliade's inner circle, in which the obviously autobiographical main character, who has been slapped in the face, remonstrates with himself: "Tell yourself that you are the son of a nation of martyrs ... dash your head against the walls, but if you wish to be able to look yourself in the face, if you don't wish to die of shame, do not weep."

THE REIGNING ACADEMIC FIGure at the university, or at least the figure who exercised the most influence on the writers we are concerned with, was a philosopher named Nae Ionescu. He possessed a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Munich, and he was a charismatic orator capable of producing an almost hypnotic influence in his lectures to packed auditoriums. Depicted by Laignel-Lavastine as more or less an intellectual charlatan whose brilliant performances were cribbed and plagiarized from German philosophical sources, Ionescu nonetheless succeeded in obtaining an indelible grip on the finest minds of the younger generation. His lectures, according to Cioran, were only half prepared, so that "we were present face to face with the working out of his thought. He communicated this effort to us, the tension working in a reciprocal manner.... Such professors are rare."

What did students absorb from the teachings of this spellbinding professor? He traced the crisis of modern man, which culminated for him in the emergence of the ideology of democracy, to the fusion of the philosophical subjectivism of Descartes with the mathematical method and scientific uniformization imposed by the Renaissance. To this individualist perspective he opposed that of the submission of the individual to the national collectivity—not the legal nation, but the organic one, the community of blood and spirit, which was, according to him, the only living and creative reality. Up to 1933, such protofascist ideas, which formed the common coin of a good deal of the German philosophy of the time, were not given any political application by Ionescu, who had been in favor of the restoration of King Carol II in 1930. But in 1933 he went to Germany and was much impressed by Hitler's rise to power. On his return he protested, along with Eliade, the ban issued against the Iron Guard, one of whose members had recently assassinated the liberal prime minister. It was in 1933 that the philosopher also made personal contact for the first time with C. Z. Codreanu, the founder and leader of the Iron Guard, and apparently a powerfully impressive personality.

The Iron Guard was as vicious and brutal as other fascist formations—perhaps even more than some when it came to murderous violence against the Jews—but it differed from the others by containing, along with a strong nationalistic component, a religious one as well. It combined, according to Laignel-Lavastine, "the *Führerprinzip* [the cult of the Leader] with the Christian prototype of the apostle and the Balkan model of the *haidouks*, those who meted out justice on the highways, a type of Robin Hood of the Carpathians." Each member of the Iron Guard was supposed to submit himself to a discipline that would transform his character, and—at least in theory—the movement was closer to some sort of religious sect than to a customary political formation. This made it much simpler in later years for Eliade, in his extremely untrustworthy memoirs, to sanitize his close association with the Iron Guard by describing it as "having the structure and vocation of a mystical sect rather than of a political movement." In fact, the organization offered candidates for all the elections and participated in all the political campaigns. Still, as late as 1980, Eliade stressed the religious component of its ideology, which glorified terrorism and assassination as examples of personal self-sacrifice. The Iron Guard, he wrote, was "the sole Romanian political movement that *took seriously* Christianity and the church."

II.

AFTER SKETCHING IN THIS background, Laignel-Lavastine moves on to follow the careers of her three protagonists during this period. Cioran was born of a clerical family in what had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and as a *lycée* student was one of the few who took advantage of the well-stocked German library. As his notebooks show, he imbibed the very best of both old and new German philosophy, as well as Russians such as Dostoevsky and Shestov. In 1933, at the age of twenty-two, he began to publish articles in the anti-Semitic weekly *Vremea*, in which Eliade also regularly appeared. Cioran's contributions were distinguished by an extreme cultural and ethical pessimism derived from Schopenhauer, as well as by an antirationalism absorbed from Nietzsche, Simmel, and Scheler. Petreu stresses the influence of Spengler, to whose thoughts on the decline of the West, she argues, Cioran remained indebted all his life. His writings were also characterized by an anguished concern over the status of Romania on the world scene. By what means could his country succeed in raising itself above the mediocrity in which it seemed to stagnate? How could it "emerge from a thousand years of sub-historical vegetative life," as he wrote in 1936?

Like other students of Nae Ionescu, Cioran had begun to sympathize with the Iron Guard without accepting some of its ideological presuppositions; and he always refused to affiliate completely with a political movement. But a decisive moment in his life was a Humboldt fel-

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lowship to Germany in 1933, where he lived until the summer of 1935. He was tremendously impressed by the new dynamism that Hitler had imparted to German life, and compared it sadly to the inertia at home. "To tell the truth," he wrote to a friend shortly after arriving, "there are things here that please me, and I am convinced that a dictatorial regime would succeed in conquering our native morass." He admired Hitler more and more as time went on, and he expresses such admiration in no uncertain terms in the articles that he sent back for his Romanian readers. "There is no contemporary political figure," he wrote, "for whom I feel a greater sympathy and admiration than for Hitler," who had succeeded in infusing "a messianic inspiration to a domain of values that democratic rationalism had rendered banal and trivial." Along with many others, he attended the popular courses of the philosopher Ludwig Klages, an anti-Semitic Nazi sympathizer, whom he compared to Ionescu, and placed on the same level as Heidegger. (Klages wrote a huge three-volume work to demonstrate that reason had always been a dissolving and corrupting force in human life.)

On returning home, Cioran performed his obligatory military service in the army, and then, starting in 1936, taught philosophy for a year in a *lycée*. During these years he published three books, two on religion and the third—the most scandalously provocative work that ever came from his pen—titled *The Transfiguration of Romania*. Here he raises the problem of the integration of minorities, and not only defends Romanian xenophobia but also attempts to develop a rigorously systematic and historical anti-Semitic argument to prove that the Jews are inassimilable. "The feeling of animosity toward strangers," he declares, "is so characteristic of Romanian national sentiment that the two are forever indissoluble.... We have lived for a thousand years under their domination [that of strangers], and not to hate them, not to get them out of the way, would be proof of a lack of national instinct."

As for the Jews, Cioran writes that "every time that a people becomes conscious of itself, it fatally enters into conflict with the Jews." One can learn to live with other minorities, such as the Hungarians and the Saxon Germans, but this is impossible with the Jews "by reason of the particular *structure* of their mentality and of their *inherent* political orientations." Cioran repeats the usual litany of anti-Semitic charges, but attempts to give them a logic and consistency they would not otherwise possess, linking them to essential characteristics of the Jewish mentality. (His book was written after Hitler had passed the Nuremberg laws in Germany.)

Most of Petreu's book is devoted to a very thorough and quite critical analysis of this work, the only purely political tract that Cioran ever produced. His anti-Semitism and xenophobia were commonplace in Romanian thought, but Petreu views his political ideas as quite independent in the context of a period dominated by a conflict between "occidentalism" and "autochthony" (a reliance on native traditions). Cioran rejected both: neither a capitalist transformation along European democratic lines nor a re-affirmation of the national values embodied in rural life met with his approval.

Instead, he was in favor of increased industrialization and expressed considerable admiration for Lenin and the Russian Revolution, though of course abhorring its materialist ideology. Moreover, the transformation of Romania could only be nationalist, and it was here that he coincided with the Iron Guard, proclaiming in 1937 his confidence in the group's "heroism which begins in brutality and ends in sacrifice." He met Codreanu several times, but wrote to Eliade in 1935 that "no political doctrine receives my ultimate approval." Cioran left Romania again in 1937, having applied for a study grant to Spain, the land of Unamuno. But the civil war made that impossible, and so he spent three years in France instead.

III.

ELIADE, AS ALREADY NOTED, found no difficulty at all in accepting the ideology of the Iron Guard, which he viewed in the light of his own preoccupation with religion and spirituality. The difference between him and Cioran, whose book *The Transfiguration of Romania* Eliade prepared for the press as a service to his friend, is clearly illustrated in a letter in which Eliade is full of praise for the section on the Jews and other minorities, but objects to Cioran's contemptuous remarks about the Romanian village as containing nothing but "a biological reserve." For Eliade, it was the source of national-religious values that had existed for centuries—and were again being revived by the Iron Guard. In a series of more than fifty articles between 1934 and 1938, he praised "the Captain," as Codreanu was called, for inspiring such a movement and urged young intellectuals to join the cause. "The significance of the revolution advanced by Corneliu Codreanu is so profoundly mystical," he declared, "that its success would designate the victory of the Christian spirit in Europe."

Eliade's adhesion to the cause, however, was by no means instantaneous. It was only in December 1935 that he decided that "the primacy of the spiritual does not imply the refusal of action." In 1936 he began openly to support the Iron Guard; but his aim was "to provide its ideology with a more solid philosophical foundation." One is reminded of Heidegger's attempt to provide Hitlerism with what the philosopher considered a worthier intellectual grounding. Eliade carries on a continual battle against the ideas of the Enlightenment and traces the degeneration of Romania to its attempt to adopt such alien notions: "Being a foreign importation, the democratic regime concerns itself with matters that are not specifically Romanian—abstractions like the rights of man, the rights of minorities, and the liberty of conscience." Far better a dictatorship like that of Mussolini, which is always preferable to a democracy because, if the latter goes to pieces, it will "inevitably slide toward the left" and thus toward communism.

An important event of these years for Eliade was the return of the coffins of two of his friends, both prominent Iron Guardists, killed fighting for Franco in the Spanish Civil War. A huge semi-official demonstration was organized to honor their remains, and Eliade wrote three articles, one published in the journal of the Iron Guard itself, to consecrate the glory of their sacrifice. As usual, he endows this event with his own pseudo-religious aura. "The voluntary death of Ion Mota and Vasile Marin," he wrote, "has a mystic significance: the sacrifice for Christianity." By this time he had become an active partisan of the Iron Guard; and when the Guard fell out of favor with the government in 1938, leading to the arrest of Codreanu and several hundred of his most prominent followers, Mircea Eliade was among them.

The conditions of their detention in a camp, once an agricultural school, were

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far from onerous, and courses were organized by Ionescu and Eliade, who also managed to write a novel there, called *Marriage in Heaven*. His wife's uncle was a general close to King Carol II, and since Eliade suffered from a tubercular condition, he was soon allowed to move to a mountain village and returned home early in December. Later that month Codreanu was killed, presumably while attempting to escape, and the Iron Guard movement was sternly repressed. Eliade had lost his university post, but he confided to Cioran that he "regretted nothing," and he wrote a play, *Iphigenia*, that exalted the ideas of sacrifice and death for one's country in words literally reproducing those he had used about the two Iron Guardists who had sacrificed themselves for Franco.

Life for Eliade in his native land was becoming difficult, and his correspondence reveals that he was seeking to go elsewhere. He made efforts in the direction of the United States and France with no success, and finally had to settle for a post as cultural attaché in London before Romania entered the war against the Allies. The English were quite well informed about his past, and classified him as "the most Nazified member of the legation," possibly a spy for Germany. When he was transferred to Portugal, there was some discussion as to whether he should be allowed to leave the country, and he was filled with indignation at being stripped and searched before his departure. He spent four years in Lisbon, where the dictatorship of Salazar, which he called "a Christian form of totalitarianism," was much closer to his political tastes than anything he could find elsewhere. While performing his tasks in the embassy, he also wrote a hagiographical but scholarly biography of Salazar, who deigned, much to his delight, to grant him an audience, and then entrusted him with a message to deliver to General Antonescu. Eliade's trip to Bucharest in July 1942 was the last time he was to see his native land.

IV.

THE THIRD MEMBER OF THE trio was Eugène Ionesco, and the jacket of Laignel-Lavastine's book contains a photograph taken in 1977 in Paris at the charming and peaceful little Place Furstenberg, just a few steps away from the swarming crowd at St.-Germain-des-Près. The picture captures the three exiles talking together in the friendliest fashion, and has aroused a good deal of criticism, because it would appear that all three were guilty in a similar fashion of the "*oubli du fascisme*," the forgetfulness about fascism, indicated by the book's title. The text makes clear, however, that Ionesco's politics had always been fiercely hostile to the fascist temptation. Indeed, his famous play *Rhinoceros* (1959) is based on his horrified fascination with what he saw taking place as the members of his generation each yielded to the fascist spell.

The play depicts a small provincial village where the inhabitants gradually become transformed into rhinoceroses that destroy everything in their path. Ionesco's journal records the process by which, as he wrote, "I saw how my brothers, my friends, gradually became strangers. I felt a new spirit germinating within them; how a new personality was substituted for theirs." These new personalities were those of "the ideologists and semi-intellectuals" who mutated into "rhinoceroses"; a character called "the Logician" in the play, presumably based on Nae Ionescu, precipitates this transformation.

But Ionesco, too, possessed a past that he wished to keep hidden, though it was relatively anodyne compared with that of the other two. For one thing, there was the question of his family. Ionesco's father was a Romanian lawyer with a French doctorate, and his mother was presumably French. But there appears to be some question about her origins: she may not have been a French citizen at all, and was probably of Jewish ancestry. None of this is mentioned in Ionesco's autobiographical writings; but he spoke of his mother to Mihail Sebastian, whose friendship, unlike that of all the others, he continued to cultivate, and who comments that "I had long known that his mother was Jewish from hearsay." This conversation occurred in 1941, just fifteen days after an Iron Guardist pogrom, horrifying in its slaughter, had taken place in Bucharest.

Ionesco taught French literature at the University of Bucharest, and became well known in the 1930s when his book *Non* was given a prestigious literary award. In it, he scathingly attacked the eminences of Romanian literature for their "ethno-linguistic nationalism and historicism." Meanwhile, he was keeping a journal that nourished much of his later work, in which we see him rejecting the collectivisms both of fascism and communism. In 1938 he received a grant to study in Paris from the director of the French Cultural Institute who, a few months earlier, had given one to Cioran; but though the two lived in the same section of Paris and had common Romanian friends, they carefully avoided each other's company.

At this time Ionesco was much influenced by Emmanuel Mounier, the founder of the journal *Esprit*, and a liberal Catholic who attempted to steer a middle course between left and right and fathered a doctrine known as "personalism." It was anti-capitalist and highly critical of the weaknesses of liberal democracy, but it also stressed the importance of preserving the rights of the individual personality not as a political entity, but as a moral-spiritual one. Mounier has been sharply criticized for having contributed to the undermining of the respect for democracy that marked the prewar years in France; but what impressed Ionesco was his emphasis on safeguarding the moral responsibility of the individual. Both Cioran and Ionesco sent home articles describing their impressions of Paris: the former depicted the city and France itself as "a nation fatigued and worn-out, at the twilight of its history," while the latter spoke of them as "the ultimate refuge of humanity."

AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF THE war in September 1939, Ionesco decided to return to Romania—a decision he bitterly regretted. He remained there until the summer of 1942, desperately trying to leave again without success. During this period the Romanian government was taken over by General Antonescu, who for five months shared power with the Iron Guard. They instituted a reign of terror "of an indescribable savagery," particularly against the Jews, but also massacring other opponents and kidnapping former members of the government and prominent intellectuals to be executed. Antonescu, disturbed by the chaos, finally suppressed the Iron Guard with the help of German troops. Meanwhile new laws against the Jews were added to those already in existence, and applied to "converts" of the past and present as well as those clinging to their faith; all were excluded from teaching, as well as from any other professional office or occupation, except those with special per-

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mission from the head of state. Ionesco became frantic, as his notebooks reveal; and after several futile efforts to obtain passports and visas, he appealed to friends in several ministries for help. As a last resort, they arranged for him to become press attaché at the Romanian embassy in Vichy (France by this time had been defeated). As he put it, "I am like an escaped prisoner who flees in the uniform of the jailer."

This is the second part of his Romanian past that Ionesco kept concealed: these Vichy years are never mentioned in his autobiographical writings. A full account of them is given in Laignel-Lavastine's book, using the documents now available from his dossier in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest and references in his letters of the time. It is quite clear, to cite the text, that this "was a strategy of survival"; and though he hated every moment of his duties, he performed them conscientiously enough to receive a promotion to cultural secretary in the spring of 1943.

Much of his time was given to encouraging the translation and publication of Romanian writers, and to maneuvering among French journals in the complicated maze created by the collaborationist, semi-collaborationist, and purely literary publications. Ionesco carefully avoided the first and preferred those that attempted to preserve a literary autonomy, even if it was necessarily limited. He also secretly employed as a translator, using a pseudonym, a Romanian-Jewish poet whose works had been illustrated by Brancusi and Victor Brauner. Very far from being lenient toward her subjects, Laignel-Lavastine does not omit other duties performed by Ionesco that might be considered "compromising"; but she concludes that his record is "in general quite honorable." Still, those were years that he wished to forget.

V.

Cioran was also in Paris at the outbreak of the war and decided to return to Bucharest in the autumn of 1940, though he, too, eliminated these months from accounts of his life. The reason is quite simple: he arrived when the Iron Guard had practically taken over the government; and on the very day that it was committing the atrocities already mentioned, he spoke on the radio with ecstatic praise for the "Legion" (as the movement was also called). "Codreanu," he said, had "instilled honor in a nation of slaves; he has given a sense of pride to a spineless herd." He also published several articles along the same lines and, preparing his return to France, obtained an appointment as cultural attaché to the Romanian embassy in Vichy. Cioran took up his new post in March 1941, but broke all records for the brevity of his service, which lasted only two and a half months. Meanwhile, he managed once again to obtain a study grant with the help of his former benefactor, now at the Collège de France, and returned to live and write in occupied Paris.

During these years, he spent a good deal of time with another ex-Romanian intellectual of Jewish origin, Benjamin Fondane (actually Vecsler), who had become a fairly well-known literary critic and poet through his works in French. In a letter to his parents in 1946, cited by Petreu, Cioran writes that "[Fondane] proved to be more gentle and more generous than all my 'Christian' friends taken together.... In the long run, all ideas are absurd and false; only the people are there, regardless of their origin or religion." When Fondane was finally denounced and arrested, Cioran went with Jean Paulhan to plead for his release. Surprisingly enough, they were successful in his case; but Fondane refused to leave without his sister, who had also been taken into custody, and they both perished in Auschwitz.

There can be little doubt that, as Laignel-Lavastine notes, "the arrest of Fondane shook Cioran profoundly," and left an indelible impression on his ideas and his values. He later wrote an admiring essay about his friend, and in addition helped Fondane's wife to re-edit his works after the war as well as to complete an important unfinished book on Baudelaire. He also wrote an article asking that Fondane's name be included among those deported writers whose names were inscribed in the Pantheon. Laignel-Lavastine criticizes him for having called Fondane "Moldavian" rather than Jewish (as if this were not understood), and because other phrases might be interpreted as containing traces of his own previous anti-Semitism. But actions, such as his intervention for his friend's release, speak louder even than such words; and this is not the only instance in which suspicion is cast on any genuine transformation of sentiment in Cioran.

No such problem arises with Eliade, because no transformation of any kind took place. Quite the contrary. Eliade kept a notebook throughout the war that is now deposited in the University of Chicago library, and which, since it was never intended for publication, he did not undertake to revise so as to blur and distort his opinions and actions. It is an astonishing document, revealing a self-adulation merging on megalomania and a fervent commitment to the triumph of Hitler, Mussolini, and Antonescu over the "Anglo-Bolsheviks." Comparing himself with Goethe, whose genius he admired, Eliade concludes: "My intellectual horizons are vaster." Despite the consolation of such reflections, he was terribly depressed by the course of the war. After the defeat of the Germans and their Romanian allies at Stalingrad (which he called "a tragedy"), followed by the invasion of North Africa and the British victory over Rommel, Eliade was upset to such an extent that he notes: "Insomnias, nightmares, depression."

For him, the triumph of the Allies meant "the abandonment of Europe to the Asiatic hordes." Even though Jews were being slaughtered right and left in his homeland, not to mention elsewhere—and Eliade's diplomatic position kept him perfectly well informed—not a word about any such events appears in his pages. As the handwriting on the wall became more and more legible, he resolved not to return home, but to take another tack. "I have decided to 'penetrate' Europe more deeply and with more determination than I have done until now," he writes. Several months later, he sees himself operating as "a Trojan horse within the scientific arena," whose aim was "scientifically to validate the metaphysical significance of prehistoric life." This is exactly how he behaved

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after Antonescu was overthrown and he was discharged from his position at the Romanian embassy. He had influential scholarly connections in Paris, particularly the cultural historian Georges Dumézil, and he used this influence as well as others to obtain temporary teaching appointments. He had begun to write his *Treatise on the History of Religions* in 1944 and his influential *The Myth of the Eternal Return* a year later; both appeared in French in the immediate postwar years, and launched Eliade on his way to international fame and a permanent post in Chicago.

VI.

THE GREAT VALUE OF LAIGNEL-Lavastine's book is her thorough investigation of the Romanian background, and in a much larger framework than the one provided by Petreu. The chapters devoted to the postwar years of her three protagonists, though of great interest in themselves and barely touched on by Petreu, deal with more familiar and easily accessible material. A good deal of criticism has been leveled against her book, but none, to my knowledge, has really undermined the factual basis of her indictment, even though she may be faulted on matters of detail.

A different question arises when she discusses the issue of whether Eliade and Cioran ever underwent any sort of "true transformation" of their earlier views, or only engaged "in a secret game of projections, calculations, and concealments." This involves matters of interpretation on which opinions may differ. Such a question, as she concedes, applies only "very weakly" to Ionesco, who was more a victim of circumstances than of any ideological commitment he had reason to regret. In later years the picture on the book jacket of the three men engaged in friendly conversation could create a wrong impression, even though it approximates at least a modicum of the truth of what became their relation.

In the immediate postwar years, many of the Romanian intellectuals in Paris (not all, to be sure) clustered around Eliade, whose hotel room became "one of the principal rendezvous of the exile." Ionesco showed up at such gatherings, as he told a friend, only in order "to escape from [his] undermining solitude," while at the same time declaiming against this group as "an affair of Legionnaires [Iron Guardists] who have not repented." Moreover, aside from the need to overcome the "painful isolation" that he felt, the Romanian political situation had changed entirely, and he now found himself more or less partially in agreement with his ancient enemies. A communist government had taken over Romania in 1947, and Ionesco could join the others in deploring this imposition of the collectivism—of the right or the left—that he had always abhorred.

All through his later life he actively supported democratic causes, affixing his name to petitions to support the Prague Spring, the Afghan resistance against Russia, and the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate, and joining movements such as Amnesty International. He was tireless in his support of Israel, thus bucking a strong current of French *gauchiste* opinion. He joined Arthur Koestler, Leszek Kolakowski, and Czeslaw Milosz, among others, in his anti-communism. He is depicted as thus "sliding to the right," but doing so in defense of the values in which he had always believed: the liberty of man, humanism. As more or less of a *gauchiste* herself, however, Laignel-Lavastine cannot resist a dig at "the rather reactionary side of the old academician, which sometimes brings on a smile or a reaction of annoyance" when "his anti-communism becomes in the end a little ridiculous." This is a nasty thrust that does her little credit.

ELIADE'S REMARKABLE CAREER illustrates his skill and success at playing "the secret game of projections, concealments and calculations." Reference already has been made to the falsification of the memoirs and journals that is illustrated all through the volume; but his Iron Guard past nonetheless caught up with him from time to time. His application for appointment to the French Center for Scientific Research, though sponsored by a formidable array of prominent scholars, was turned down because a renowned medieval historian of Romanian origin wrote a detailed letter about his early commitments. Similarly, safely installed in Chicago in 1973, Eliade was invited for a lecture in Israel by Gershom Scholem, whom he had met at colloquiums in Ascona, Switzerland, initially sponsored by Jung (whose political past is also very suspect). In 1972 a small Israeli journal of the Romanian emigration had published an article revealing part of Eliade's connection with the Iron Guard, but without citing any written sources. Scholem was troubled, but Eliade wrote a letter piling lie upon lie, indignantly denying that he had ever published a line in praise of the Iron Guard and relying on the inaccessibility of the Romanian material at that time.

The invitation to Hebrew University was withdrawn, though Scholem, presumably incapable of believing in such duplicity, urged Eliade to visit him personally and offered to arrange an interview with the author of the article to clear up matters of disagreement. But Eliade prudently cancelled the trip, and never visited Israel then or later. Part of Eliade's strategy was to cultivate friendships with prominent Jewish scholars and intellectuals, as Ravelstein/Bloom had rightly charged. Saul Bellow spoke at his funeral in 1986. His novel indicates that he may have had some regrets at having done so.

Nothing blatantly anti-Semitic can be found in Eliade's postwar writings, but the prejudice is transposed into a much more scholarly key in his theory of religion. One of the cornerstones of his doctrine was that archaic man lived in a world of cyclical time, whose recurrences were marked by festivals of one kind or another in which "sacred time," the time of religious experience, was recreated. The modern world has largely lost this ability to relive "sacred time" because the Hebrews (as Eliade now calls them) broke with the cyclical time of "the eternal return" by linking God with linear time. "The Hebrews," he writes, "were the first to discover the significance of history as the epiphany of God," and this discovery of history ultimately led to all the ills of the modern world. Daniel Dubuisson, a French analyst of Eliade's views on mythology, concludes that this summary notion of history "especially invents a new accusation against the Jews, that of an ontologi-

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cal crime, a capital crime and without doubt unpardonable." Eliade thus remained true to himself in this erudite disguise during his later years, when his worldwide fame reached its apogee and his death was mourned with sanctimonious reverence.

THE MOST COMPLICATED CASE of all was Cioran, whose later writings are shot through with passages that may be read as implicit expressions of regret for his earlier convictions, but who never seemed able to repudiate them publicly. He was much more forthright in his correspondence and in private conversation. In a letter to a friend, Cioran declared in 1971 that "when I contemplate certain of my past infatuations, I am brought up short: I don't understand. What madness!" This would certainly seem to indicate their rejection on his part. In conversation with the author of a book about the commandant of Auschwitz, he said: "What Germany did amounts to a damnation of mankind."

There can be no question that, unlike Eliade, the issue of his previous fascism and anti-Semitism tormented the complicated, involuted, self-questioning Cioran, whose thought was always directed toward undermining all of mankind's certainties, including his own. The analysis of the postwar Cioran given here is the most complex and controversial in Laignel-Lavastine's book. He is depicted as both evading any overt responsibility for his past and also, "unlike Eliade," weighed down by feelings "inseparable from a desire for expiation and a sense of diffuse guilt ... [an] 'oppressive sensation' with which he admits sometimes awakening in the morning, 'as if I bore the weight of a thousand crimes.'"

As in the case of Eliade, Cioran's past sometimes came back to haunt him. Paul Celan, the great German poet of Romanian origin whose parents died in a Romanian camp and who had himself been deported to a labor camp, was also living in Paris and translated one of Cioran's works, *Précis de décomposition* (*A Short History of Decay*), into German in 1953. The two saw each other from time to time, and Cioran came to the poet's aid when Celan was fighting off accusations of plagiarism. Yet when a Romanian critic on his way through Paris laid out the particulars of Cioran's past, Celan refused to have anything more to do with him. Despite this break, Cioran was deeply disturbed when he heard of the poet's suicide. It is suggested that this relationship with a Jewish writer may also have been meant as the same sort of "cover" that Eliade exploited so successfully; but there is nothing to support such a suspicion except that, when Cioran was once asked whether he knew Céline, he mentioned Celan instead. One has the feeling here that, despite her own evident intention to be as fair as possible in stressing Cioran's "ambivalence," Laignel-Lavastine is pushing matters too far.

The same problem arises when she comes to Cioran's attitude toward the Jews. When, for example, a new edition of his most anti-Semitic book, *The Transfiguration of Romania*, was published in Romania, he insisted that the chapter on the Jews be eliminated, along with a number of remarks about them scattered through the text: "I completely renounce a very large part [of the book] which stems from the prejudices of the past, and I consider as inadmissible certain remarks about the Jews," he wrote to a friend. Nothing could be more explicit. Even more, in one of his later French books he included a section on the Jews called "Un peuple de solitaires" ("A Solitary People") that was hailed as philo-Semitic. But Laignel-Lavastine believes this to be an illusion, because on comparing this text with what Cioran had written years ago, she finds that the image now given of the Jewish people and their history is much the same as that provided earlier—except that what had been evaluated negatively in the past is now given a glowingly positive spin. Moreover, Cioran continually identifies his own situation with that of the Jews, writing that "their drama [that of the Jews] is mine." In 1970 he mused that "I lacked an essential condition fully to realize myself: to be Jewish."

This obsessive self-identification with the Jews is interpreted as "the reversed expression of the same psychopathological phenomenon" that had earlier led to Cioran's worst excesses. Perhaps so; but to glorify the Jews instead of vilifying them surely indicates some sort of change. Also, the objection is made that while Cioran often expresses regret about his errors of the past, he never does so except in general terms, without attempting to explain why they are now rejected. For Laignel-Lavastine, Cioran's tantalizingly ambiguous relation to his past is hardly a genuine attempt to come to terms with the practical consequences of the ideas he once espoused and still, on occasion, seemed to toy with in a rhetorically half-amused fashion. She wonders whether, as was the case with Eliade, he was merely "translating into an acceptable language ideological motifs and attitudes [that are] ideologically disqualified in the West." Petreu is much more affirmative on this issue, and cites someone who visited Cioran during his last days, when he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease: "From his hospital bed, desperately trying to overcome the symptoms of his disease, Cioran stumblingly told his guest: 'I ... am not ... an ... anti- ... Semite.'"

Let me add my personal testimony at this point. During my years in Paris I met Cioran and saw him on a number of occasions, and we had a good many conversations (particularly but not exclusively about Russian literature, in which he took a passionate interest). Whatever the twists and turns of his troubled conscience, the brilliantly sardonic, self-mocking, and fascinating personality that I knew could not have been a conscious manipulator who would set out deliberately to deceive.

If there is a general criticism to be made of Laignel-Lavastine's excellent book, it is that Cioran is pursued too relentlessly, perhaps in an effort to counteract his devoted admirers in France and elsewhere—the late Susan Sontag, for example, who introduced him to the United States. A lack of knowledge of the Romanian background allowed him to be seen innocently and too exclusively in the light of his soaring philosophical speculations. But if these are now shadowed by the political commitments that he himself later found incomprehensible, the reliable evidence of his genuine struggle to cope with his past deserves more sympathy. In Cioran's case, compassion is not the enemy of truth. ■

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BELGRADE DIARIST

Consonant Struggle

I HAVE SEEN CROWDS BEFORE, but I was taken aback by the Belgrade book fair, where some 15,000 people attended my opening address. A few days later, too, at the airport lost and found, I watched an officious frown break suddenly into a smile. "You're a writer!" the woman behind the counter exclaimed and, as others watched enviously, produced my bag. The power of writing! During the fair, a reporter asked whether writers in the United States were like writers in Eastern Europe and, when I said I didn't know, volunteered, "Here, writers are gods." Well, that's a difference, I said.

WORDS COUNT IN SERBIA. THE WEEK of the book fair, a national referendum approved a new constitution focused not so much on justice as on the upcoming U.N. decision on the status of Kosovo. Its point, everyone knew, was the preamble's preemptive assertion that Kosovo "is an integral part of the territory of Serbia." Though the constitution professes commitment to "free and direct elections," the ethnic Albanians who make up some 90 percent of Kosovo were—ironically and tellingly—not allowed to vote on it.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE NEW CONstitution proclaims Cyrillic the script "in official use," unlike other scripts, which will be "regulated"—an interesting declaration, given that ethnic Albanians use the Latin alphabet. Moreover, most Serbs I spoke to, young and old, were comfortable with both scripts. One high school student told me that she recently did a physics exam using half Cyrillic and half Latin letters; her teacher laughed, apparently, but didn't mind. Others said that, if asked upon finishing a book what alphabet the book had used, they couldn't say. My Serbian publisher claimed that he uses both randomly. He picked Cyrillic for my book, he said, because he thought "Gish Jen" looked good in Cyrillic, as it does: A stately procession of strokes somehow evocative of a Roman numeral written in Hebrew, it has a graven quality agreeably—no, appropriately!—suggestive of stone tablets and immortality.

BUT WILL CYRILLIC ITSELF PROVE IMmortal? Most international communication uses the Latin alphabet, after all. A protective stance would not be irrational, especially as Cyrillic is such a wonderful fit for Serbian. Modified in the nineteenth century by one Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Cyrillic renders Serbian perfectly phonetically and, unlike the Latin alphabet, represents every sound with one letter. It requires no diacritical marks. It promotes literacy. It is handsome. And, yet, somehow one senses that the constitutional mandate regarding its use has little to do with elegance.

OF COURSE, LANGUAGE AND ORTHOgraphy have been politicized elsewhere. Witness the biscriptalism represented by Hindi and Urdu, or the English-only movement in the United States. Still, only in the Balkans do experts produce differentiating dictionaries, lest people speaking to one other fail to realize that they are not speaking the same language. All right, Serbian transcribes where Croatian transliterates. Variations in pronunciation abound. Serbian privileges the vernacular, Bosnian incorporates Turkish loanwords, and both borrow more freely from the West than purist Croatian. Still, the mutual intelligibility of the languages once known as Serbo-Croatian is so high that their speakers have been much exercised not to understand one other. In his splendid book, *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration*, linguist Robert Greenberg details the superb creativity and fantastic tenacity with which language planners have gone about devising words and spelling rules in an effort to shore up their vessels of authenticity. How these poor planners have pitted themselves against migration, commerce, intermarriage, habit. Yet on they toil, heroically striving to maximize, as best they can, obfuscation.

AND NO ONE LAUGHS! THAT'S THE amazing thing. In the United States, an international drama involving orthography manuals could only be a comedy. In the Balkans, it is life and death. Obviously, the context is different, what with the Balkan countries ever threatening one another. And, as Croatian language reformer Ljudevit Gaj once wrote, "A nation has nothing holier nor dearer than its national language, for it is only through language that a nation . . . continues or vanishes." Still, in this globalized age, it is extraordinary to behold a local context vital enough to allow combat through consonants.

MEANWHILE, THE ALBANIANS IN KOSOVO not only employ the Latin alphabet but speak an Indo-European language intelligible only to other Albanians. No differentiating dictionary required; they are indisputably not Serbian. Of course, the Serbs have various claims to Kosovo: There are ancient Serbian monasteries there, and guess where the Battle of Kosovo—their great defining conflict—took place? The people of Kosovo, though, can only be claimed through a pluralistic model of nationhood—not exactly the Serb style. Few observers imagine the new Serbian constitution will sway U.N. special envoy Martti Ahtisaari, who is expected to grant the region some form of independence in the upcoming months.

AS FOR THE ALBANIAN KOSOVARS, THEY are certainly anticipating independence—or so said the Bosnian guide who led me through Sarajevo. A wiry guy with wiry hair, he gossiped shamelessly about his more illustrious clients, including Richard Gere and, recently, members of Kosovo's parliament. "They said they don't want to be part of Albania, but that they're tired of being fucked by the Serbs," he reported. And, as we approached the hotel where the Kosovars had stayed: "They said that, if the U.N. doesn't give them independence, they are going to invite in the mujahedin." Hmmm, I thought. Did they really say that? The hotel, reportedly owned by the Albanian mafia, opened onto a magnificent allée of 100-year-old sycamores; golden and hypnotic, the trees led magically away to a destination you could not quite see. How lucky that mujahedin help was unlikely to prove necessary, I thought. And yet, still for a moment, I shuddered to think of the El Mujahid brigade, reincarnated—knowing that, if it came to it, the Albanians would communicate with the Afghans and Egyptians and Pakistanis just fine.

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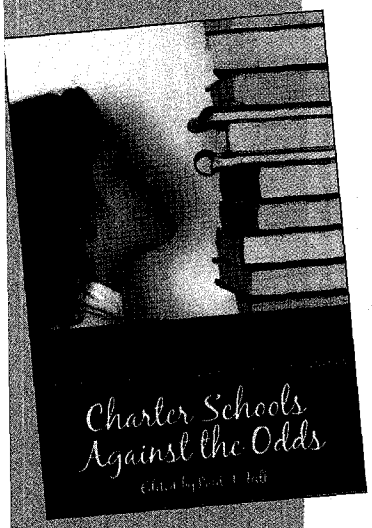

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Paul T. Hill is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of the institution's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education. He is also a research professor in the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs and director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, both at the University of Washington.

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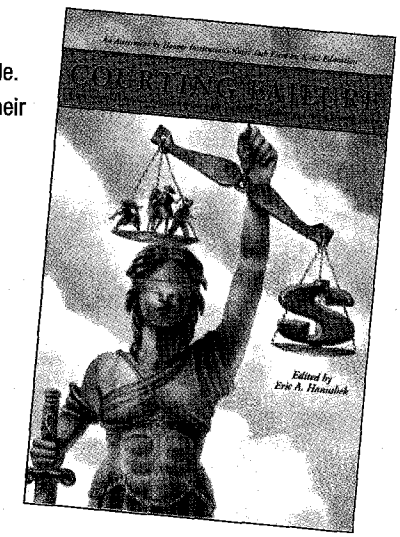

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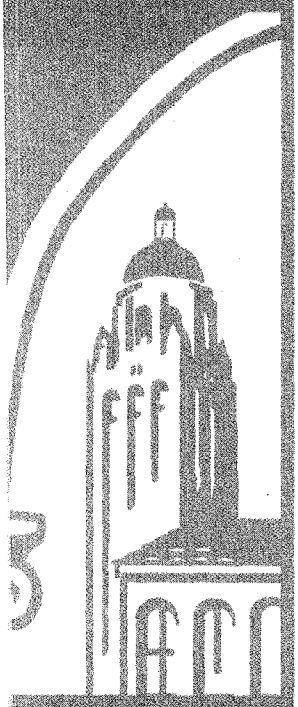

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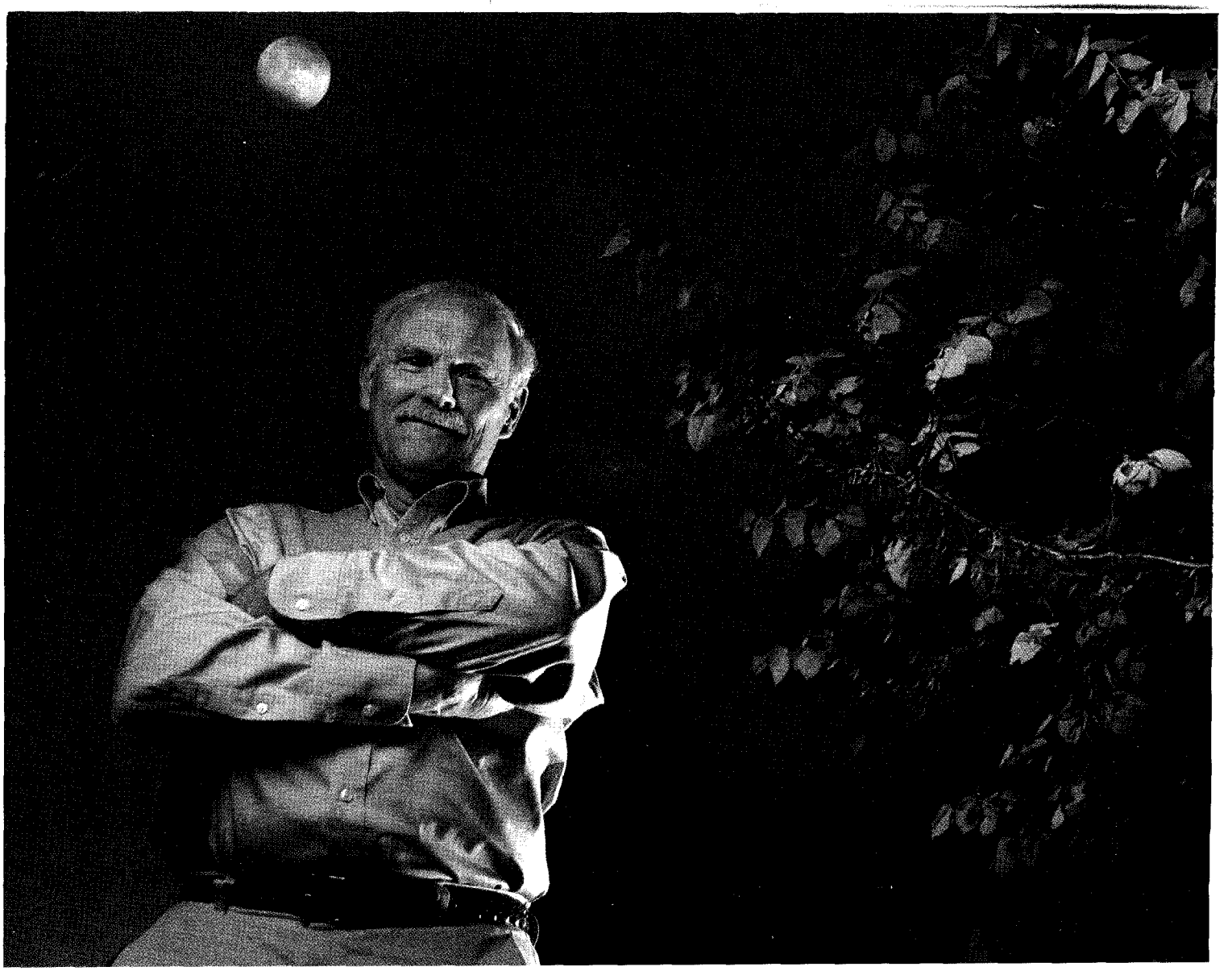

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